

# **Accounting for taste: Public patronage and the social legitimacy of visual art in Edinburgh**

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For Martin. Thank you.



I declare that this thesis represents my own work, and that where the work of others has been used it has been duly acknowledged.

Anja-Maaike Green

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## Contents

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<i>Abstract</i>	iv
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	v
<i>Glossary of terms</i>	vi
<i>List of abbreviations and acronyms</i>	vii
<i>List of figures</i>	x

### **Part I      Orientation**

Chapter 1	Art in context	1
Chapter 2	Theory and methodology	25
Chapter 3	The Edinburgh arts network	57

### **Part II      Discourses and practices**

Chapter 4	The autonomy of art	93
Chapter 5	Extending the social function of art	146
Chapter 6	The 'funding game'	188

### **Part III      Conclusion**

Chapter 7	Examining Edinburgh's art world: Summary and conclusions	245
Appendix		259
Bibliography		274

This thesis is about the social function of publicly-funded art and how it is produced and produces particular types of arts management, arts officers, arts managers, artists and audiences. Chapters one and two review literature on the definition and production of art, and utilise Actor Network Theory and post structuralist perspectives on power, discourse and subjectivity to inform an ethnographic approach to data collection -- participant observation and analysis of policy and funding documents, newspaper cuttings, political speeches and art works. By focusing on the discourses, policies and practices of a range of organisations and individuals in the contemporary visual arts scene in Edinburgh, I argue that the art world can be understood to operate as a network. Chapter three looks at what constitutes the arts network in Edinburgh, and at the institutions and professional groups through which discourses about art are projected. Chapters four to six examine three key discourses: art as autonomous or pure; art as having a direct social, educational, and economic role which delivers tangible outcomes; and art as a quantifiable entity. I demonstrate that the category 'art' is mobilised in various ways: as a device through which to define and defend artistic integrity against the changing priorities of government and public funding agencies, for example, while counter pressure from the government's utilitarian agenda has led to the politicisation of the artistic field. Art, I conclude in chapter seven, is strategically manipulated in accordance with changing socio-political agendas -- it is a cultured enterprise reflective of the subjective, class, and professional interests of those involved. Arts practice, policy and administrative processes are as much subjective exercises shaped by the preferences of individuals and rivalries within and between various institutions as they are by apparently 'rational' intentions. Broader shifts in the British political landscape are also refracted through the art world. Managerialism, bureaucratisation and accountability in the arts are indicative of the broader consolidation of state power within public life. This thesis questions whether the exceptional position of art as an autonomous enterprise will prove politically tenable.

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## Glossary of terms

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Artist	Visual artists only (other types of artists such as musicians are specified directly)
Arts administrator	Individuals working in administrative positions either within public funding agencies, or arts organisations
Arts officer	Arts bureaucrats and administrators working for public funding agencies (local government and the Scottish Arts Council)
Arts manager	Individuals occupying managerial or director level posts within arts organisations, galleries or other arts facilitates
Arts workers	Generic term for any individual working within the arts sector
Public art	Arts organisations or art work which has been publicly funded

## **List of abbreviations and acronyms**

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ACE	Arts Council of England
ACGB	Arts Council of Great Britain
ANT	Actor Network Theory
BAS5	British Art Show 5
CAC	City Art Centre
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CEC	City of Edinburgh Council
CEMA	Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts
COSLA	Council of Scottish Local Authorities
DCMS	Department of Media, Culture and Sport, Westminster parliament
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
ECA	Edinburgh College of Art
EIF	Edinburgh International Festival
EPG	The Edinburgh Partnership Group
ESW	Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop
GCC	Glasgow City Council
ILAM	Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management
IRCAM	Institut de Recherche et de Co-ordination Acoustique Musique
MP	Member of Westminster parliament
MSP	Member of Scottish parliament
NGoS	National Galleries of Scotland

NEF	New Economics Foundation
RDCEC	Recreation Department, CEC
RSA	Royal Scottish Academy
SAC	Scottish Arts Council
SE	Scottish Enterprise
SIPs	Social Inclusion Partnerships
SLGIU	Scottish Local Government Information Unit
SNP	Scottish National Party
Quango	Quasi autonomous non governmental organisation
WASPS Studios	Workshop and Artists Studio Provision Scotland Limited
WHALE	Wester Hailes Arts and Leisure
yBa	Young British Artists

The following abbreviations are used to indicate whence evidence has been gathered (see Appendix):

C	Conversation
CM	Consultation meeting
CP	Conference proceedings
DF	Discussion forum
HE	Hanging exhibition
GO	General observation
GT	Gallery talk
IT	Interpretive notes
L	Lecture
M	Meeting
PF	Public forum
PV	Private view
S	Seminar
T	Talk
TC	Telephone Call

The following abbreviations are used to categorise primary source documents (see Bibliography):

AP	Arts policies
AR	Annual reports
BD	Benchmarking documents
BVD	Best value documents

CIR	Creative industry reports
FD	Funding documents
GD	General documents
OP	Operational plans
PR	Press releases
VA	Visual art



## List of figures

<i>Figure</i>	<i>page</i>
1. The Edinburgh arts network I (funding and accountability)	35
2. Post-devolution arts funding in Scotland	62
3. <i>David Hume</i> - John Stoddart (1997)	69
4. City Art Centre, Fruitmarket Gallery, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	76
5. <i>Counter Motion</i> - Anne Bevan (1999)	80
6. <i>Budget Range Sex Dolls (Double Self Portrait)</i> - John Beagles and Graham Ramsay (2000)	85
7. The Edinburgh arts network II	89
8. Internal differentiation - Visual art in Edinburgh	98
9. <i>To the Memory of H.P. Lovecraft</i> - Mike Nelson (1999)	100
10. <i>Matter</i> - Tomako Takahashi (1999)	100
11. <i>The Artists Real CV</i> - Anon (2000)	102
12. <i>128 b.p.m. (Happy Beat)</i> - Paul Carter (1999)	103
13. <i>Soldiers leave the armed forces</i> (detail) - Chad McCail (1999a)	105
14. Contemporary and community art	116
15. <i>Money is destroyed</i> - Chad McCail (1999b)	118
16. <i>The Singing Butler</i> - Jack Vettriano (1997)	122
17. <i>Pumpkin</i> - David Shrigley (1998)	139
18. Grants Process Activity Timetable Internal Log -- Recreation Funding	201
19. Artists and Administrators	237

## Art in context

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Controversy has been a characteristic feature of the concept of art. But it may be said that today it is in a state of crisis unlike any that existed before (Hanfling, 1999, p. 3).

Controversy surrounding definitions of 'what is art?' is well documented. Less visible but similarly contentious is the debate within the publicly subsidised art world over the particular function and purpose to which the arts are applied. These debates are not directly concerned with questions either of beauty or with the intrinsic qualities of art, but rather, with the particular roles we assign the arts in society. Drawing on Strawson's proposition that there are certain categories and concepts such as truth, knowledge, and time, which are so deeply embedded within human thinking that they actually have no history or variation across time, Hanfling (1999) suggests that art is not one of these categories. For a medium so historically dependent on the solidity and consequently durability of its own products, the category of art itself is remarkably vulnerable to fluctuations in preference, influence and socio-structural conditions. Art is slippery: it is the very malleability of the term which makes it open to controversy and varying levels of appropriation and application. Not only is the nature and constitution of art contested now, perhaps more so than it has ever been (Harold Rosenberg (cited in Donoghue, 1983, pp. 98/110) refers to art in this unstable form as the 'anxious object'), the value art has for us as a society is also hotly disputed. I hope through this thesis, to introduce the meanings, people, institutions, and processes through which the social function of visual art is debated in Edinburgh.

Whilst briefly alluding to the philosophy of art, this chapter principally focuses on examining various social theories about the production of art. The aim is to document some of the principal debates about art, and to marshal those theories which can most effectively address the focus of my research. At a basic level, I am interested in how and why we use the arts in the ways we do. Specifically, I question what values and meanings are currently attached to public art in Edinburgh, and address from where these influences emanate. There is little public funding available for art work within the broader city environment and therefore I primarily focus on public art undertaken within gallery spaces. I investigate how discourses about art, or attitudinal accounts, relate to different modes of practice and management, and draw the reader's attention to some of the consequences their enactment has for public arts development and the principal actors involved in it. Although focusing on visual art, it is also clear that similar principles, conditions and effects can be found within other areas of the arts. In addition to highlighting key discourses about art, I examine how tensions resulting from different expectations, values, and the functions applied to art -- by artists/gallery managers, and arts officers -- are resolved in practice.<sup>1</sup> As such, this thesis is an exploration of how different constituent groups, or actors, attempt to negotiate a space for their own particular vision of visual arts development in the city. Of interest are the justifications they make for continued public subsidy, a struggle for resources which has been thrown into sharp relief through progressive public spending cuts, thus exposing the manner in which art must compete with other political demands and public service commitments. As Hanfling (1999) notes, these are interesting times in which to examine the value and functions attached to art, not only in terms of aesthetic disputes about artistic form, but also because of the precarious position public art occupies within the context of wider changes in political ideology, national and local government priorities and practices, and subsequent adjustments in resource allocation. This context and the particular challenges it generates are common to many different art forms and as such my research has some resonance across the art world.

According to 'aesthetic experience' accounts (also referred to as aesthetic attitude)

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<sup>1</sup> See glossary of terms.

within philosophy of the arts (Bell 1915; Beardsley, 1982), “it is possible to characterise art in terms of an appropriate experience or attitude” (Hanfling, 1999, p. xiii). Emphasis is placed on the essential qualities of art works, and the manner in which they are experienced by the viewer. In contrast, advocates of the ‘institutional theory’, such as George Dickie, debunk this aesthetic attitude as untenable myth. Hanfling summarises their position as based on the premise that “allowance must be made for anything whatever to count as a work of art, provided only that it has been put forward as such by a suitable member of the art world. This presumes nothing about the intrinsic qualities of the work, or about the experiences or attitudes of those who view or hear it” (Hanfling, 1999, p. xiii).

Crucially, institutional positions challenge attitudes celebrating the transcendent qualities of art, pulling our gaze down from the heavens to ground level where works of art jostle for position, meaning and form among the practices and conditions of everyday production and consumption. As Arthur Danto suggests, “to see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry - an art world” (quoted in Hanfling, 1999, p. 20). Art, it is argued, is defined as such by suitable institutions or individuals, and it is therefore, subjective, institutional, and social. In contrast, the aesthetic experience discourse is predicated on art works attaining height above the madding crowd both in terms of original conception -- the term ‘high art’ is no coincidence -- and also on sustaining continuous distance from the quotidian during the course of its life span.

Philosophic disputes about the nature of aesthetic judgement have their equivalent positions within the professional art world, and other disciplinary explorations -- such as art history and sociology -- of the field. The art world, after the eighteenth-century anyway, has, for instance, become reliant upon promoting the elevated status of art and artists, and maintaining distance between itself and other creative professions -- an attitude of mind which in the sociology of art is broadly referred to as the autonomy of art (Bourdieu, 1996b; Bürger, 1984; Heywood, 1997). My own work is concerned with the ways in which this spatial metaphor -- of elevation above and distance from -- takes real form through the distinctive discourses circulating within the art world, and through the material means by which the profession

attempts to perpetuate its autonomous interests.

Loosely paralleling the autonomy of 'art ideal', and the institutional theory of art, are contrary understandings about why we take an interest in the arts, and why we fund and support them. Interpretations diverge into either personal or social reasons. Although I acknowledge that these positions are two in a number of contested terrains, it is possible to see how the autonomous view of art converges with an individualised experiential account of artistic benefits, and is subsequently set against institutional theories which demonstrate a commitment to the broader social advantages resulting from exposure to the arts. On a basic level, it is these two alignments of art as either autonomous/abstract, or social/utilitarian which, in their various and confusing manifestations, provide the analytical and empirical foundations for my research. What, in practice, are the consequences of these beliefs? How do they, as discourses, organise and direct the artistic field? And what can we learn about the art world, its people, institutions, and practices, by questioning the ways in which the category of art is manipulated towards their own ends? My research is about the category 'art', how it is produced and produces particular notions of arts management and types of artists, gallery managers, arts officers, and audiences. Specifically, I am interested in changing ideas about the social function of visual art in Edinburgh, who and what produces these discourses, how they are enforced through public funding agencies and the art world, and the impacts their projection has both on artistic development in the city and upon the different people involved.

Understanding the meanings we give to art is vital in any our appreciation of why we use the arts in the ways we do. In this respect, I differ from the philosophy of aesthetics which most commonly debates the definition of art in terms of questions of value, namely, 'what is art?' and 'what is good art?' My questions are framed more along the lines of 'what meanings do we attach to art?', 'how are these meanings sustained', and 'what social function do we subsequently assign to art?' These three questions cannot be separated. Attitudes towards art are constantly evolving, and art's social status, form and function adapts accordingly. This process is not merely a battle between dominant or subordinate discursive positions or cultural ideals, it is

also a struggle for related resources, material and financial, and for professional welfare. Public arts' policies, professional status and arts budgets are dependent on securing the validity of one's own account of the role and function of art above the accounts offered by others (chapters four and five). As such, discourses about art must also be attached to the institutions and social/professional groups through which they are articulated (chapter three). An appreciation of power is necessary for this. In the following sections I assess key elements of the literature on art, and select those aspects pertinent to my project.

### **Institutional theories of art**

Since I frame this inquiry as an investigation into discourses that constitute art as well as an appreciation of the means -- material, institutional, practical -- through which these accounts are enforced, it has been important to develop an analytic framework capable of balancing the discursive alongside the material, institutional, and practical (chapter two). I demonstrate how these factors connect together to form the artistic field as a whole. This has proven tricky methodologically, and, on occasions, the more I have sought to grasp the differences making up the art world as a living practice, the more they have seemed to slip through my fingers. Throughout this research, I found myself teetering unsteadily between a compulsive thirst for more affecting variables and a desire to provide a disciplined coherent account. This is (I think) both the advantage and disadvantage of attempting to produce an integrated social theory of art. Such projects must necessarily be at once expansive and evasive. I make no apology for this since recognising complexity is more important than subjugating it to satisfy an imagined academic convention. The research field is not mine to grasp completely: I am simply a visitor observing a passing story, and already this narrative has shifted on. This is not false humility: it confirms a pragmatic and provisional approach to an evasive social world.

If, then, the study of art has broadly fallen into the disciplinary alignments of aesthetic theory, art criticism, art history, and sociology of the arts, it is also true that geographers have made important contributions to the field. Attention has focused on representation, agency and visual methodology (Rose, 2001), public art and the



environment, and the relationships between art and urban cultural configurations (Zukin, 1988; Davis, 1990), multiculturalism (Keith, 2001), and nationalist sensibilities (Wood, 2002). Further, creativity has been studied as a form of emotional geography (Smith, 1997) and as a spatial manifestation of broader social and professional inequalities (Rose, 1997a). To date however, sociologists (Bennett, 1998; Bourdieu, 1993, 1996a/b; Frascina & Harris, 1997; Hobsbawm, 1998; McGuigan, 1996; Pearson, 1982; Platner, 1996; Rosler, 1999; Wolff, 1993) have more persistently accounted for the institutional and structural foundations of aesthetic practices and the artistic profession. Necessarily therefore, I draw heavily on this work while also using the particular configurations of the research context to guide my use of literature across a number of other disciplinary boundaries. This use of theory does, I believe, offer a more flexible and responsive approach to research material.

Understanding art as sociologically situated has principally involved analysis of artists and artistic practices, arts production, and arts institutions as socially, politically, economically, and historically contingent. Such approaches have counterposed autonomy of art discourses with explanations about the effectiveness of structural factors in determining the artistic field. In such a way, the material and the mundane, the powerful and the unaccounted for have entered into the frame. Art, it is argued, does not exist above everyday life. It is, rather, inextricably rooted within the quotidian, inconceivable before it, and unsustainable without it. This contextual view of art thus offers as a starting point an art world that is deeply human as well as material, and because of this fallible. It is this flawed social context, with its irreconcilable, self-interested, deluded and hopelessly optimistic character which is the focus of this research. I am interested in art not as object or artefact but as a cultural process, a system of values, communication and action through which particular practices take place, subjects are formulated, and professional interests consolidated.

Aesthetic concerns within the study of art (Cooper, 1992; Hanfling, 1999; Townsend, 1997) focus on two fundamental questions: the nature of aesthetic experience, and the basis upon which aesthetic judgements are made (Wolff, 1993).

The distinctiveness of the aesthetic -- as both discipline and practice -- has been problematised in sociological perspectives which argue that aesthetic codes are discursive formations contingent upon particular contexts external to the product itself. For example, by highlighting how art developed into a separate sphere of operation within contemporary capitalist economies, theorists suggest that "there is nothing sacred and eternal about the aesthetic" (Wolff, 1993, p. 141). Aesthetic experience and our appreciation of the aesthetic are both socially and historically framed. The "belief in the irreducible quality of the aesthetic, as an essential human attribute or mode of being" (Wolff, 1993, p. 142) does, however, continue to inform aesthetic philosophies, artists and arts managers as well (see chapter six). Kant's claim to universal validity within judgements of taste is abstractly misinterpreted in order to accord essential qualities to the object itself. According to Somerville (1996) however, Kant's thesis is based upon individual experience of a particular object, and therefore judgements of taste are singular rather than universal. The beauty of one rose cannot become a rule through which to judge the beauty of all roses. Notwithstanding this, individual viewers subsequently attempt to universalise their opinions, and it is this projection which accounts for the confusion surrounding artistic judgement as a universal property. Kant emphasises individual integrity rather than universal aesthetic laws.

Sociologists such as Wolff, insist however, "that there is no such thing as the 'pure' operation of the aesthetic consciousness", and that the aesthetic is "always necessarily thoroughly permeated with the experiential and ideological features of social existence" (Wolff, 1993, p. 142). As such, the sociology of art negates Kantian approaches to aesthetic practice as 'disinterested', in arguing that aesthetic judgement is the product of non-aesthetic values, although it is not entirely reducible to these (Wolff, 1993, p. 142). Value in art, is therefore, relative, historically contingent, and determined by art historical and aesthetic discourses formulated within particular institutional and professional contexts. Consecrating institutions, a term Bourdieu (1996a) uses to denote agencies which operate as arbiters of taste, must also be recognised as being socially determined. In Wolff's assessment, the sociology of art has enabled us to criticise assumptions about the timelessness and universality of aesthetic judgement, to expose how the art world encodes particular ideologies and



values into its activities, and to show how despite its apparent autonomy, art criticism “is never innocent of the political and ideological processes in which that discourse has been constituted” (Wolff, 1993, p. 143). As such, the sociology of art has championed the notion of art, its processes, practitioners, products, critics and theorists, as socially constructed and transformed. Not only does this belief in the social production of art, stand contrary to philosophical approaches to aesthetics as contained, it also reveals similar rifts within the art world itself, between those dedicated to enduring beliefs in the irreducibility of art, and those who view art as a deliberate construction manipulatable towards particular ends. Interestingly, intellectual approaches to the study of art thus replicate professional approaches to the practice of art as either autonomous or socially integrated. This basic juxtaposition of discourses about art provides the two structural pegs upon which this thesis hangs.

### **Patronage and artistic production**

I now turn from considering the nature of aesthetic discrimination to look at the broader factors and processes through which art takes form. Howard Becker (1982) provides a detailed examination of the role of government, legal and institutional mechanisms in the production of art. His is a view of the art world suffused by strategic interventions, regulated by taxation policies, contracts, state interactions, business transactions and marketing frameworks. Changes in the law affecting markets, for instance, affect consumption of the arts, and the speculative character of the art market is interlinked with tax breaks in America. Art is variously portrayed as a commodity, as property, of economic value, and a legal concern. Becker illustrates the ways in which the aesthetic is embedded within wider political, legislative, and market conditions. He unsettles accounts which unquestioningly place the artist as central to artistic production. Stating that “Art is a social product”, Wolff similarly argues “against the romantic and mystical notion of art as the creation of ‘genius’, transcending existence, society and time, proposing rather that it is the complex construction of a number of real, historical factors” (Wolff, 1993, p. 1). As such, art has “to be seen as historical, situated and produced, and not as descending as divine inspiration to people of innate genius” (Wolff, 1993, p. 1). Intellectual challenges to

the pivotal status of the artist are echoed by professional disputes within the art world, a debate I examine empirically in chapters four to six.

Becker's account of the legislative frameworks and structures of state patronage underpinning artistic production is balanced by a highly deliberate rendition of the full variety of factors which affect the making of art. He traces prolific strands of influence and affect, outlining how traditions and community contexts, technical skills, public expectations, time available, relationships with consecrating institutions, considerations of law, distribution, and audiences each shape artistic processes. Becker provides an impressively mundane and ultimately predictable account of artistic emergence, pronouncing the field to be highly integrated, inextricably rooted within government, politics, the market, and law as well as conditioned through incidental and everyday occurrences, and sustaining socio-cultural conventions. He argues that art is a collective activity, and that artists operate within a broad network of co-operating people, all of whom are essential to its production (Becker, 1982). To similar effect this thesis utilises a framework based on the ideas of Bruno Latour (1993) to develop this notion of an interactive arts network, not only as an explanation for how communication is conducted and organisations are linked together, but also to know how actions are shaped. Caught in this web of influences and relationships -- material, temporal, legal, aesthetic, social, and so on -- it is difficult to see how art can transcend this all encompassing embrace to attain the elevated status some would accord to it. Becker always draws our eye down to a human level. The business-like actions of artists, for example, seem to undermine elevated notions of art as sublime or spontaneous inspiration (Becker, 1982). Becker encourages a view of art as contingent, rooted within specific conditions of production, and conceived and delivered in restricted rather than free circumstances.

The dichotomous relation between art and the state is problematised in Becker's *Art Worlds* (1982) through empirical example, such as in the way the government upholds laws which safeguard the links between artists and their work after sale. In this regard, Becker's work is of interest because he encourages speculation about the nature of state interaction, or interference, with works of art, but also because he grounds artistic production within its socio-economic, legal and government context.

He highlights the effectiveness of these relationships, indicating how artists are dependent on the state as benefactor, censor, disciplinarian and protector. For Becker the state both supports and constrains the artistic field by creating a framework of property rights; limiting artists' actions by protecting non-artistic rights; supporting art forms which further its own purposes; and using state power to suppress work likely to mobilise citizens in undesirable ways (Becker, 1982). His portrayal has resonance with my own conviction that the relationship between artists and the state is inherently contradictory (a point explored in chapter six), at once hierarchical and defiant, dependent and autonomous, submissive and illusive. The mutual dependency of this relationship, as well as the strategic manner in which it is enacted, is a recurring theme throughout this thesis. Government is, I show, an integral part of the integrated network that creates and controls art (see chapter three). Government influence is activated through overt techniques such as the promotion of harmonising art (chapter five), and monitoring and evaluation procedures (chapter six), as well as by simply suppressing certain artistic forms through 'benign neglect' (Becker, 1982).

### **Art and social reform**

In *Culture: A Reformer's Science*, Tony Bennett (1998) explores the anthropological definition of culture as a way of life inherited from Edward Burnett Tylor (1874), and later notably developed by Raymond Williams (1965, 1989a). In the course of an assessment which respects Williams' immense contribution to cultural studies, Bennett unpacks the foundations of this view of culture, tracing the intellectual links between Tylor, Matthew Arnold, and Williams, and throwing light on the implications of this inheritance for cultural studies as a discipline, and cultural policy as practice. Although the epistemological foundations of cultural studies are not my concern here, Bennett's exposition of the relationship between particular views of culture -- in my case, visual art -- and the types of policy and practice they give rise to, is useful to me.

Considered the originator of the anthropological view of culture, Tylor's conception of culture was pluralist and relativist, in contrast to the Eurocentric humanist idea about culture as absolute which Arnold advocated. Bennett draws on Stocking's

critique of Tylor's modern relativist vision of culture, arguing that despite rejecting Arnold's hierarchical notion of aesthetic progress, Tylor simply replaces this view with his own equally unprogressive concept of human progress (Stocking in Bennett, 1998). Whereas Bennett suggests Arnold regarded the study of culture as involving ideal norms, providing ideals to be emulated, and subsequently getting "the raw person to like that" (Arnold cited in Bennett, 1998, p. 94), Tylor established evolutionary norms of human behaviour, and ranked different cultures according to this hierarchy.

Bennett contends that Williams arrives at an unholy conjunction between nineteenth-century traditions, namely Arnold's ideas about aesthetic refinement and Tylor's commitment to evolutionism, and his own (Williams') Marxist historicism (Bennett, 1998). Williams maintains that culture can be divided into three categories; the 'ideal' definition of culture which, influenced by Arnold, suggests processes of human perfection, universality and absolutism; the 'documentary' definition of culture referring to a body of intellectual and creative work; and the 'social' definition of culture as a way of life (Williams, 1965, p. 57). Bennett argues that Williams does not suggest that the 'social' or 'documentary' definition of culture should over-ride the 'ideal' view of culture, and therefore he fails to adequately break up the stranglehold of Arnold's hierarchical view of cultural perfection (Bennett, 1998, p. 94). For my purposes, the 'ideal' and 'social' definition of culture Williams espouses are useful as means through which to work through contrary notions of artistic autonomy/excellence, and art as utilitarian, respectively. To recognise the usefulness of these conceptual tools, and the ways in which such views may be reflected within the research field, is not, however, to make a judgement about the value of one over the other.

Although he concedes that Williams has a different political project to his predecessors, Bennett argues that, on balance, both Williams and Tylor uphold an evolutionary view of culture based on human growth and development. Both conclude that cultural analysis consists of identifying cultural forms which either "contribute to, or impede, this general process" (Bennett, 1998, p. 100). Ominously, the net consequence of this view of culture "involves the application of a normative

grid through which some ways of life were to be actively developed and supported while others were marked for passage into history” (Bennett, 1998, p. 100). Importantly, this concept of culture also enabled decisions to be made about the types of people who were in need of reform as well as the types of project which required promotional energies. Perfectibility and reform are thus inscribed into Williams’ definition of culture, as the “general growth of man as a kind” (Williams, 1965, p. 59). It is here that Bennett hooks into Tylor’s commitment to the study of culture as a ‘reformers science’, examining how the reforming tendency of culture as a discipline has translated into the reforming tendencies of culture as a form of practice. Bennett concludes that through the deployment of this particular view of culture, the analysis and practice of culture has become a ‘reforming science’. He contends that the view of culture as a way of life, inherited from Arnold and Tylor, and refined by Williams, has enabled cultural administration to continue the reformist agendas of the nineteenth century in modified form.

... the management of cultural resources in ways intended to reform ways of life remains very much a part of the active politics and policy of culture in contemporary societies. ... a normative mechanism remains at the heart of what is still a reforming endeavour. The objectives, of course, are different, but the mechanism remains very much the same. That mechanism, moreover, remains dependent upon - indeed, is inscribed within - the normative structure of the concept of culture that has been bequeathed to us by Arnold and Tylor and which, through a complex process of inheritance, has entered into contemporary policy discourse via the work of Williams (Bennett, 1998, pp. 104-105).

Bennett’s analysis of the historical foundations of this tendency and its contemporary manifestations, helps to provide a context for my own investigation of current cultures of reform within the Edinburgh art world (see chapters five and six).

The concept of culture as a whole way of life which Williams espoused has, according to Bennett (1998) and others (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993), substantial repercussions for cultural policy making. This view of culture has provided the definitional means through which to shift away from support for elitist ideals of art towards a more expansive anthropological notion of culture as an enlarged and



inclusive field of activity (Bennett, 1998). Bennett argues, “Its role, in effect, has been that of discursively managing the transition from an arts to a cultural policy framework” (Bennett, 1998, p. 191). The observation is interesting, echoing as it does one of the central tenets of this thesis, namely that public arts administration has evolved from an initial focus on art, into what I hope to show is its current distraction with the social and transformative effects of culture (see chapter five). This delineation between arts administration and cultural policy makes explicit the uneven and recurring movement between ‘art for art’s sake’ as upheld by artists and gallery managers (see chapter four), and culture as a social force, as advocated by government and related funding bodies (chapter five). It is possible to transpose arguments within the art world about excellence/elitism versus dumbing down/populism, onto this narrow or expansive view of culture, and, subsequently to reflect on the attraction these two positions hold for artists and the Scottish Arts Council [hereafter SAC], and government administrators respectively.

As I hope to demonstrate, the relationship between these two positions is by no means straightforward, and there is an exchange of opinion between views, as well as conflicts of identification within them. Although once firmly situated within a high art/narrow view of culture, the SAC has, for instance, undertaken responsibilities associated with the utilitarian idea of art both as a response to changes in government priorities and as a result of administering the National Lottery. This interplay of different discourses created tensions within the institution itself, sparking the confusion of identity and purpose which characterises the organisation today. My thesis is in part, therefore, an attempt to explore the ways in which those involved in the arts actually deal with dilemmas resulting from clashes between ideal visions and the realities of practice. Rivalry and compromise, I suggest, are essential to many forms of human interaction, and the dynamism of art, its unique identities and driving passions, are as much fuelled by competitive interests and animosity as by empathy and collective endeavour (chapters three and six). Bennett’s critique of Williams’ position provides the basic tools through which to conceptualise the relationships between artists/gallery managers and government/arts officers, and to see how unfolding differences of opinion spring from this very basic idea about art as either a narrow concern, or as a broader cultural paradigm. Given this, I build on Bennett’s

argument about arts administration and cultural policy by transposing my own ideas about the autonomy of art and the utilitarian function of art onto this basic juxtaposition.

Bennett also draws on Robert Young's (1995) proposition that culture is usually conceived in contrast to something outside itself -- there are echoes of Said (1978) here -- and, consequently, that definitions of the cultural necessarily involve identification of the non-cultural. The splitting which this view of culture involves -- between culture as lack, and culture as possessing a means through which to overcome the insufficiency of others -- is not neutral but based on a parallel qualitative gradient. Definitions of valid cultures as opposed to those needing to be overcome, are based, therefore, upon a normative grid.

It is this hierarchical ordering of the relations between different spheres of culture that results in a strategic normativity in which one component of the cultural field is strategically mobilised in relation to another as offering the means of overcoming whatever shortcomings (moral, political or aesthetic) are attributed to the latter (Bennett, 1998, p. 92).

This thesis suggests that, in Edinburgh, cultural ideals are similarly mobilised within arts policy as a means through which to justify decisions about other types of cultural practices and those who engage with them (Green, 1992, 2002). As such, the meanings given to culture cannot, I suggest, be separated from the meanings given to the people who practice them (chapter five). The study of art in its 'objective' sense, must be attached therefore to the practice of the arts in an anthropological sense, and it is necessary to account for the ways in which the art world operates as a cultural process, attaching meanings to people as well as objects. In particular, I look at how subjects are objectified, named and positioned by others, but also at how different groups of people are affected by their involvement with the arts network.

By exposing the normative tendencies of Williams' view of culture, Bennett provides one means through which to understand systems of legitimisation, indicating how the process of splitting and grading cultures is integral to the administration of art. Drawing on this argument, I investigate in chapters four and five how ideal definitions

of culture based on particular ideas of human progress are mobilised as a comparative norm to guide and frame subsequent decisions about what should or should not be included within the remit of public art. Attempts either to integrate or split art from other forms of expression are essential to this process of identification and rule as too, are arguments about the type of contribution art makes to the overall quality of life.

Bennett argues that adoption of the Williams' view of culture has also broadened the objects of cultural administration, weakening "the policy stranglehold of elitist concepts of art", whilst simultaneously opening up new areas of cultural life for reformist programmes of government (Bennett, 1998, p. 91). Apparently democratic, egalitarian, and agnostic impulses have resulted in the broader distribution of funding. But they have also incorporated previously untouched areas of life and types of people, into the range of this normative world view. This project has involved both "cultural maintenance programmes" dedicated towards developing and extending existing patterns of thought, as well as "targeting particular ways of life for transformation and their replacement by new ones" (Bennett, 1998, p. 104). As I hope to show, this enlargement of the reach of cultural policy does have real material consequences, not only for the status of artists and the autonomy of the arts profession (chapter four), but also for forms of cultural practice deemed worthy of support, and for the types of people seen to be in need of cultural provision. It is also evident that this expanded view of culture has been accompanied by an extension in the range and intensity of state involvement in the arts (chapters five and six). Not only do such liberties have implications for what in Britain has been termed the 'arms length principle', and the politicisation of the cultural field, but they also give rise to new techniques of government in the form of increasingly intrusive administrative procedures. Social and administrative reform are complementary aspects of the same process. Decision-making mechanisms in public funding, their administrative forms, and conceptual principles are examined in chapter six. In that way, I hope to complete the cycle from discourses, to people, to practices, and material processes.



## **Habitus, class and the artistic field**

To summarise, I have sketched aesthetic/experiential accounts of artistic production, and contrasted these to perspectives rooted within a conception of art as an inherently social phenomena. The narrow view of art has been set against more expansive definitions of culture as a way of life, which opens up the potential for a more inclusive approach to arts development. This position has, however, been problematised as creating the conditions -- conceptual and material in terms of subsequent models of practice -- which have facilitated more intrusive government of the arts, and further enabled those in positions of authority to declare the authenticity of their own accounts above others. Neither aesthetic nor institutional, narrow or expansive views of art are in themselves capable of providing the integrated balance between individual/collective experience and structural effects, and discourse and practice which I seek for my own research. For instance, they do not provide an adequate account of attitudes towards art or how these dispositions may be generated and dispersed through particular socio-cultural configurations.

Pierre Bourdieu (1990a, 1991, 1993, 1996a/b) has provided the primary conceptual and empirical tools through which the study of culture is currently pursued. Although not original (Moi, 1991) -- Marx (1967), Foucault (1991), Durkheim and Althusser (cited in Fowler, 1998), and Gramsci (1971) provided fertile ground for the examination of cultural reproduction and social power -- his capacity to integrate the tiniest gestures alongside more pervasive structural conditions into a coherent theoretical and empirical account, has continued to fascinate and challenge. Bourdieu allows us to give parity of status to the minutest details of social existence and he incorporates the mundane into an expansive theory of everyday life (Moi, 1991). He also provides the basis for an understanding of the multitude of factors through which we make meaning. This generosity of vision is given force by his reluctance to discriminate between what human beings think, mean, and do, and he consolidates these conditions further by linking them to the material and objective means through which we express them. Although he does not develop as dedicated an assault on the boundaries separating subject from object and sign from thing as Bruno Latour, he at least provides the intellectual tools through which to pursue this quest. The

expansive, inter-textual, context driven, and inter-linked nature of Bourdieu's work is a significant influence on this thesis. For example, I develop an expansive definition of the Edinburgh art world which incorporates apparently peripheral factors such as government discourses, policy making and administration alongside artistic objects.

The distinction between aesthetic experience and institutional theories of art is in part reflective of dichotomous conceptions of agency and structure. Bourdieu's theory of habitus and the field demonstrates a desire to disassemble this "absurd opposition between individual and society" (Bourdieu cited in Prior, 1998, p. 5). He noted in relation to Sartre's overtly interiorised approach that "from the reified state of the alienated group, to the authentic existence of the historical agent, consciousness and thing are as irremediably separate as they were at the outset, without anything resembling an institution or a socially-constituted agent having been observed" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 76). Rejecting existentialism and phenomenological accounts as lacking either an appreciation of history or the objective structures through which social interaction occurs, Bourdieu blends a structural account with a perception of individuals as active agents rather than as prisoners of prescriptive structural conditions.

His theory of habitus thus provides us with subtle and less mechanistic, deterministic, or disembodied appreciation of structural conditions. Bourdieu illustrates how structures, given form and life through signifying practices or discursive systems, in turn become embedded within individual consciousness, framing habits and dispositions from the way food is chewed to the peculiarities of aesthetic tastes. The detail in Bourdieu's own work is impressive as he plots class distinctions within the finest of social actions such as gulping or nibbling food and a repressed or belly laugh. At such moments he reveals how "groups invest themselves totally, with everything that opposes them to other groups" (Bourdieu, 1979, pp. 193-4). The tiniest modifications of appearance, gesture, mannerisms, ritual and habits, all function as social markers for the "sign-bearing, sign-wearing body" (Bourdieu 1979, p. 192). "The habitus is necessarily internalised and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions; it is a general, transposable disposition which carries out a systematic, universal application

...” (Bourdieu, 1996a, p. 170).

For Bourdieu, “the habitus is a structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices, but [it is] also a structured structure” (Bourdieu, 1996a, p. 170). Social structures are constituted discursively, and agents live through these doxic or taken-for-granted knowledge categories, and the limitations they imply. Habitus does restrict, as do the censorial tendencies of particular fields, but it also facilitates improvisation and the transformative capacities of individuals. Further, habitus is active, requiring constant investment to perpetuate existing dispositions and generate new knowledges. Accordingly, as I hope to show, the artistic field in Edinburgh is governed by complicated categories, rules and discourses which circulate in dynamic relation to each other, and which require continual input from the variety of individuals and institutions through which they take form. Although these laws and dispositions are often tacitly enforced and enacted, I highlight how they are also starkly revealed within arts policy documents and within the award criteria of grant application forms. The ideologies of cultural production are infused into the consciousness and bodies of arts workers, as well as the administrative mechanisms, material practices, and government strategies they deploy. For Bourdieu the body is almost seen as transparent, as the tangible embodiment of these mental structures and classifications which have been “constituted in the course of collective history, acquired in the course of individual history” (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 467). I suggest that utilising Bourdieu’s explanatory system could enable me to connect wider structural arrangements to the perceptual frameworks of individual actors, and to make explicit how these frameworks are embodied within practical strategies, professional processes, and material objects. This process is cyclical and not linear. It is this integration of structure, discourse and practice which provides intellectual justification for my pursuit of a field of enquiry incorporating such apparently dissonant factors as policies, administrative frameworks, art works, social events, in-depth and incidental conversations, media discourse, statistics, buildings and local government reorganisation (Bennett, Emmison & Frow, 1999). Bourdieu, as Toril Moi observes, “makes sociological theory out of *everything*” (Moi, 1991, p. 1019).

Despite this, however, I remain unconvinced by Bourdieu’s original clean division

between objective structure and mental order, or his account of how this duality is integrated through the habitus into social practice. As Daniel Miller (1994) points out, this approach which maps differences between objects and modes of thought onto differences between social groups, tends to treat social divisions as prior to the event as well as unaltered by the process of signification. Society or culture and social structures are treated as cohesive and mutually reflective/reinforcing, and Bourdieu's method struggles to account for individual diversity or the inconsistencies which I believe characterise exchanges between fields, whether they are mental schemes or social orders. I return to this dilemma in chapter two.

I now examine Bourdieu's approach to class and the artistic field. Closely related to habitus is Bourdieu's concept of the field, defined as a configuration of social relations, or a competitive space operating according to a specific framework of logic or rules. These hierarchically organised fields include political/economic, educational, scientific, legal, and cultural realms. Any field is governed by the singular logic which hierarchically orders cultural domains whilst also stratifying the order of social class (Bourdieu cited in Bennett, Emmison & Frow, 1999, p. 261). The 'rules of the game' are transposed onto a hierarchical cultural milieu which, in turn, maps onto a similarly stratified class system. The consistency and rigidity of this formulation, for instance, along with its assumptions of direct causality and effect and its debatable transference into twenty-first century socio-class contexts in Britain, are themselves cause for hesitation. Bennett, Emmison and Frow have problematised Bourdieu's concept of the field empirically and concluded "that there is not a single hierarchy organising all regimes of value" (Bennett, Emmison & Frow, 1999, p. 261). Bennett, Emmison and Frow are not the first to critique the over-powering dominance of class within Bourdieu's work (Bennett, Emmison & Frow, 1999; Frow, 1987; Moi, 1991), his fatalistic approach to the consolidation of class experience and divisions, or his reductive account of working-class cultures (Fowler, 1998; Frow, 1987; Shiach, 1993).

Although Bourdieu's class infused vision of aesthetic structuration is a useful framework through which to understand the generation of cultural capital and forms of distinction, it is of limited use as a fairly rigid model of class dynamics in action.

There is, for instance, a tendency to caricature class identities, presumably in order to clarify the generalised trends he is identifying within each class, and he does not adequately account for movement between classes whether in terms of deliberate play or through tactics of appropriation. The conceptual oppositions present in his work are rooted within parallel hierarchical oppositions between socio-economic groups, and, as such, they suppress disjunctures and departures from these static categories as well as variations within them. Bourdieu consistently retreats into simplistic interactions between uniformly defined dominant and dominated social groups. Bourdieu elaborates a bounded notion of class which needs to be rescued by the more flexible theories of infusion and interplay which are offered by Bruno Latour and Foucault. He tends towards reification of dichotomous social groups, categories of thinking, and economic positions, and consequently whilst he crucially makes the connection between how classifications create and perpetuate class inequalities, he is less successful at accounting for social mobility, the fluidity of cultural affiliations and the contingency of taste formation.

DiMaggio (1987) suggests that widespread commodification, mass markets, and loosely defined audiences have contributed to a dissolving of stranglehold differentiations between status-oriented social groups. In combination, these changed conditions amount to an era of 'cultural declassification' (DiMaggio, 1987), an argument which accords with new class formation theories by Ulrich Beck (1996) and others (Chaney, 1996). As Bennett, Emmison and Frow suggest, attention must be paid towards this potential "weakening of taxonomic boundaries", the "boundary strength of classifications", and the "sharpness of the break between social classes, and of their internal consistency" (Bennett, Emmison & Frow, 1999, p. 13). I take into my research this conviction that the connections between culture and class, are considerably more complicated than Bourdieu allows for. I view with some scepticism the symmetry of his account, with its neatly mirrored vertical oppositions, its internal consistencies, and its polarisation of interests.

Nonetheless, Bourdieu remains useful in other ways to this project. For example, according to Bourdieu, individuals and institutions within a given field compete for similar goals, enacting a game in which each aspires to attain dominance over others.



“All struggles over culture are aimed at creating the market most favourable to the products which are marked” (Bourdieu, 1996a, p. 96). The competitive nature of the artistic field as well as the processes through which goals are identified, negotiated and implemented are recurring themes within my research. Bourdieu suggests that status is dependent upon mastering the specific mechanisms of discrimination and consecration within a field, thus gaining a legitimacy which is tacitly accepted by other players. The notion of the game gives substance to this melding of self and collective interests drawn into the same choreographed performance:

the literary field ... is the site of a sort of well-regulated ballet in which individuals and groups dance their own steps, always contrasting themselves with each other, sometimes clashing, sometimes dancing to the same tune, then turning their backs on each other in often explosive separations, and so on, up until the present time ... (Bourdieu, 1996b, p. 112).

Habitus provides players with a general capacity to recognise the laws of a particular field, and to share in its stakes. Habitus is therefore an amalgamation of general dispositions, whilst the field is a specific set of social relations, laws, and goals within a particular context, for instance, the visual art world in Edinburgh. Additionally Bourdieu (1996a, p. 81) expounds a theory of cultural capital as the cultural codes inherited by individuals or generated within the schooling system (acquired capital). As an exercise of taste, cultural capital yields both a profit of distinction and of legitimacy to the individual involved. Bourdieu’s work thus exposes how possession of particular types of cultural capital enables certain social or class groups to perpetuate their own cultural interests within the context of different fields of experience. In *The Rules of Art* (1996), Bourdieu analyses how the art world, and specifically literature, is organised as a professional field. This has provided a rich analytical framework for my own examination of discourses about visual art, and the manner in which the cultural capital of arts workers themselves promote particular professional configurations.

According to Bourdieu (1996a, p. 291), capitalist and pre-capitalist societies are mobilised around symbolic capital -- “the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability that are easily converted into

political positions as a local or national *notable*” -- and cultural capital is one of the primary classificatory webs which facilitates this. Whether operating as a set of unconscious dispositions, or through explicit judgements of taste, culture sets people apart, raising some above others, reactivating the recurring metaphor of height above, and distance from. The capacity to assert difference from, and space between, varying cultural dispositions and groups of people is directly related to the relative power and authority of different individuals and institutions within the field. “Self-expression in the West has spawned constant vigilance to a ‘dialectic of distinction’” (Fowler, 1998, p. 16), a dialectic which is expressed through group practices as well as increased individualisation. For example, the various actors within the Edinburgh art world may be mobilised by the need to open up space for their ideas about the social function of art in contradistinction to the ideas of others. The distribution of cultural capital is thus linked to power, and the struggle to gain ascendancy compels the powerful to inflict symbolic violence upon others. Bourdieu’s emphasis on symbolic domination has incurred criticism for privileging institutional actions while devaluing “the subjective moment” (Fowler, 1998, p. 5). Wary of this tendency towards over-determination, in chapters three to six I examine how this battle for professional legitimacy, exercised in general terms through the habitus of the artistic field, as well as specifically through individuals, professional and institutional groups, is conducted in discursive, material, and practical ways. Chapter three identifies and explores the relationships between the different factions. I subsequently move on to examine the various strategies key actors adopt to authenticate their own account of artistic meaning and purpose.

## **Conclusion and summary**

As the preceding discussion illustrates, in addition to controversy surrounding its aesthetic status, the category ‘art’ also inspires considerable analytic dispute within the research community. Progressing from philosophical approaches to art as either experiential/aesthetic or institutional, I have traced the ways in which sociological notions of art as autonomous or socially integrated map onto this basic alignment. Through this discussion I have outlined the lines of dispute which intersect academic conceptions of art, and weighed up the relative usefulness of these positions for my

research. In particular I have shown how aesthetic approaches to art encourage a view of art as contextually abstracted and experiential, an approach which I suggest in subsequent chapters is central to artists' and arts managers' attitudes towards art. The metaphor of height above and distance from has been utilised to exemplify this notion of aesthetic autonomy.

In contrast, institutional theories of art encourage researchers to approach the artistic field as a historically contingent and socially determined system. By recognising the socially integrated nature of artistic production, this account advocates a contextualised approach to the field. Subsequently, I became interested in developing a broad approach to research which would include related factors and contexts such as discourses about art alongside analysis of systems of patronage, methods of practice, and the subjectivities of arts workers. Expansive ideas about culture as a way of life, as advocated by Williams, further enabled me to consider the ways in which arts policy and practice may be utilised as a reforming resource, working to consolidate the interests of particular views of art above others. This literature further illuminated the potential these cultural ideals have for enlarging the reach of government activities into spaces previously immune to their penetration.

Having looked at the status of art as a category of understanding and considered the contexts within which it is produced and applied, I then moved on to consider how attitudes towards art are embedded within individual consciousness. Pierre Bourdieu's articulation of habitus and the field provides the theoretical basis for conceiving of art as both a professionally and competitively constituted field of activity as well as a collection of cultural codes which are strategically absorbed and exercised to the advantages of those involved. Bourdieu's ideas provided means through which to connect structural to mental frameworks. Overall he offers a rich theoretical account of reproduction, although he is less successful at accounting for change, which he tends to view in terms of conflict, perpetual revolution and the re-creation of the bourgeoisie. In combination with the above theories, I have developed an approach to the study of art as a discursive, embodied, structural, institutional and material entity.



Given that I have elaborated a broad theoretical context for understanding how the art world operates as a social system, it is now necessary to focus in more detail upon the mechanics of this system, and to explore how it actually takes form and is enabled in practice. This discussion centres on how discourses work as a framework for action (using Bourdieu), on the institutions and techniques through which discursive positions are enforced practically (Foucault, 1971, 1991), and on the ways in which discourses and material conditions in combination make up the art world as network of relations (Latour, 1993). It is my contention that methodological techniques should be driven by the particular theoretical precepts of the research study, and, consequently, that theory and method should be explored as mutually conducive. In other words, theory should be derived from practice as much as practice should be elaborated through theory. What follows is an extended discussion of the theoretical basis for my chosen research methods.

## Theory and method

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Contrary to conventional methodology chapters, I will utilise key theoretical propositions -- Latour, Foucault, Geertz and Bourdieu -- to develop a theoretically informed research technique. This integrated theoretical-methodological approach is part pragmatic and part principled. I begin this process with a mind already 'occupied' by the epistemological remnants of an MSc in adult and community education. With the exception of Latour I had prior knowledge of the above, and other social theorists. Additionally, in the early 1990s I worked using art and new media within community art, adult education, the voluntary sector, and local government contexts. Most pertinently, I was a part-time arts development officer for five years in the Arts Development Section, City of Edinburgh Council [hereafter CEC] -- I resigned in the second year of my PhD. Necessarily, therefore, prior theoretical knowledge intermingles with ongoing methodological considerations, and my professional understandings about my research field inform my utilisation of both theory and method. These factors cannot be separated and I do not impose artificially clean boundaries between them. In contrast, I view this 'contaminated' beginning as an advantage. Research methods cannot, I contend, be drawn from uninterrupted mental space as this does not exist. Nor can methodological conventions be neatly inserted onto an entirely unknown research field. Rather, this evolution involves creative interplay between what is already known, what one wants to find out, and what one ascertains to be appropriate given one's past experience.

The elaboration of this integrated approach -- theory, method, practice -- is

structured around the following five challenges. Initially I problematise disciplinary boundaries and consider how to position my own intellectual and professional capital in relation to these. I then outline the methodological approach I adopted -- this facilitates subsequent discussion on why these choices were made and how they worked out in practice. For my second and third challenges I locate the research field within its context in order to understand how it hangs together and operates as a network of activity. I subsequently reflect on my role as research participant before addressing the final challenge, to understand discursive processes and the status of 'the researched' as subjects of my curiosity.

### **Challenging professional and disciplinary boundaries**

My interest in examining art's deployment as a social and professional device was prompted by my experience working with arts development in Edinburgh. I have, in my professional life, felt profoundly ambiguous about my status as a 'development' worker -- with the connotations of expertise and cultural superiority this inevitably implies -- and with the means through which the art world positions and legitimises itself as a profession worth public support. Such concerns expose the contradictions inherent in the status of art as a public service. It is from these disputes and my own position within them that my PhD springs. I began the research in order, I hoped, to present a more adequate understanding of the use of art as a social and developmental tool. It may also be that I was attempting to lay to rest some ghosts from my own past.

Research on arts policy, management, production, and development, has primarily emanated from either academic or professional perspectives. Chapter one introduced some of the cultural theories emanating from the academy. This may be counter balanced against the more outcome-oriented research of independent policy studies institutes, the Arts Councils of England, Scotland and Wales, and private consultants working on behalf of local and national government (Joy and Jermyn, 1999; Peacock, 2001). In general, the values, techniques, concerns and methodological conventions of these two approaches have rarely coincided. Indeed, there is some suspicion within both camps about the rigour, applicability, and validity of the other's findings. For

example, in conversation with Dr Franco Bianchini, a leading arts consultant and academic, he spoke of his frustration at the difficulties entailed in mediating between these two worlds (Appendix, 179, L).<sup>1</sup>

When I began my PhD, having worked as an arts development officer in local government for a number of years, I was struck by the lack of interest in the professional knowledge I had attained. Equally, I was unwilling unconditionally to place myself within the taken-for-granted conceptual frameworks of 'the academy'. Most importantly, I believed that allegiance with either perspective to the exclusion of the other would risk artificially exaggerating the importance of socio-cultural understanding over instrumental reasoning, or conversely, outcomes over insight, within my own work. This is a personal tale. It also stands as a general criticism about professional and disciplinary boundaries and about the ways in which elected categories divide and structure approaches to research fields, moulding studies into established disciplinary conventions, and 'potentially' cutting off fruitful exchange. I resolved to pursue a path between these two positions and hopefully, produce a more complete account of 'the field' as a result. Yet, identification as both a professional worker and an academic researcher was not easily obtained, and the conflict recurred sporadically in relation to the planning, implementation, and analysis of my fieldwork (Appendix, 24, IN).

This professional/academic dichotomy has informed the study of art as either an instrumental or cultural phenomena. Sara Selwood of the Policy Studies Institute complains that there has been a consistent failure to develop dependable data on the cultural sector, and further, that much information currently available is inconsistent and unreliable (2001). Selwood's comments accentuate the dearth of systematic statistical data within policy oriented research. My concern, however, lies more with the basic instrumental bias of professional accounts, and their reductive approach to understanding issues such as patterns of investment, audience profiles, access, redistribution of resources, and cultural regeneration. For example, despite being the largest funder of the arts in Scotland and the UK, local government has been neglected

<sup>1</sup> References to non-textual empirical material (other than exhibitions and art work) appear in the Appendix. Lettered abbreviations are deployed through the thesis to indicate how this material was gathered. For example, the letter 'L' is used to denote material gathered during a lecture (see Appendix/List of Abbreviations and Acronyms for a list of abbreviations).

as a focus for research in anything other than highly restrictive terms, namely, with respect to how much money they contribute to the arts each year.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, academic approaches to the study of art largely neglect quantitative data (Bell, 1999; Budd, 1995; Heywood, 1997; White, 1994). The arts councils have provided an appealing distraction for such researchers, with tales of private indiscretions, bloated bureaucracy, and alienating elitist attitudes (Sinclair, 1995; Tusa, 1999; Williams, 1989; Witts, 1998). Much of this work is as 'delicious' as instrumentalist accounts are turgid and reductionist. Neither provide an adequate appreciation of the connections between factors which, this thesis suggests, are fundamental to understanding how the art world operates as a system of production.

Such accounts have artificially separated policy from culture, aesthetics from professional power, discourses from action, government from artists, administration from artefacts, institution from institution, and the cultures of arts workers from models of practice. Further, little attempt has been made either to illuminate the ties which bind these factors together, or to understand the evolving and disputed logics of order which drive and shape their interactions. I maintain here that arts production consists of a tangled interplay of rationalities, actions and practices. Past studies have tended to impose simplistic structural hierarchies and oppositions onto research data, and consequently, have largely failed to address the subtle forms of affiliation, inter-organisational relations, competition, consensus, and negotiation which characterise the field in action. The purpose of this chapter is to document the theory and methods by which I sought to explicate these claims: let me begin with a conception of why such artificial oppositions may exist.

Latour (1992) is as distracted by categorisation as Bourdieu and Foucault. Yet Latour differs in that his interest lies more in what we have not been able to categorise and in those elements which defy disciplinary labels. Latour maintains that rather than the world being held together by discrete systems or discourses, as Bourdieu and Foucault would argue, it exists through networks which interweave together the mixture of 'things' through which we live and act. Latour shifts emphasis away from a focus on power and strategy as a source of action towards accentuating the

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<sup>2</sup> Local authorities in Scotland spent £37.2 m in 1998 on the arts, as opposed to £27.1 m for the SAC (not including the Arts Lottery Fund which amounted to £28.6 m (Peacock, 2001, 38).

connections between factors, and the ties which bind or facilitate movement. His abiding concern is that epistemology, the social sciences and 'the wider modern project' have created separations where they do not apply: for instance, between disciplines, science and society, nature and culture, subject and object, centre and periphery, winners and losers. Latour maintains that the use of facile epistemological breaks result in easy explanations, notably the tendency to excise objects from the entire network which gives them meaning, or to regard science as separate from politics. The moderns work of purification has made it almost impossible for us to appreciate and view the world as if "a delicate shuttle should have woven together the heavens, industry, texts, souls and moral law - this remains uncanny, unthinkable, unseemly" (Latour, 1993, p. 5).

According to Latour, criticism itself has created 'great fiefdoms' exemplified by three primary sets: facts, power and discourse, the borders between which are not transgressed, and consequently, phenomena such as the ozone layer cannot be simultaneously viewed as social, natural, political, mythical and scientific. Latour argues that each of these forms of criticism are powerful in themselves, but can only maintain their legitimacy when they are kept separate from each other. Whilst this is a debate about epistemology and method, it is also an important discussion about order as separation, and how we create and assert difference or uniformity through the separations we make. I return to this theme later. The ordering logic which creates separations has resulted in a world organised along exclusive lines, in which it is deemed critically possible to identify beginnings and endings, to mark cause and effect, to quantify action and inaction, to articulate power and powerlessness, and so on. Latour states that it is this ordering logic which holds the key to what it means to be, or more specifically, to try to be modern.

Latour's thinking in these terms highlighted how my own research potentially fell into this critical gap. Initially I found myself conceptually immured between the pragmatic certainties of the structural account and the relativising tendencies of the postmodern response. The choice between order and disorder is partly a strategic exaggeration of two theoretical accounts, but it is also a means to highlight the choices faced by researchers as they navigate through the conceptual assemblages available to



them. Latour offers some useful clues towards developing what may be termed topically a 'third way' by which we can address the cultural world in action. "In the art galleries and concert halls, along the facades of apartment buildings and inside international organisations, you can feel that the heart is gone. The will to be modern seems hesitant, sometimes even outmoded" (Latour, 1991, p. 9). If as this quote suggests, we have never been modern and we are all beginning to realise this, my conundrum could be regarded as a shared project. The task was clear, I had to develop an integrated methodological and conceptual approach which would enable me to transcend restrictive categorisations and accommodate the tricky manner in which the social world is actually organised in practice. I elected to undertake an ethnography.

### **Researching 'the field'**

Before discussing in detail the theoretical considerations underpinning my chosen approach, I will outline the techniques used. I undertook a period of participant observation involving full time research in the field -- including both day and evening work -- from January 1999 to August 1999. The references to this appear as the Appendix which includes an explanation of the abbreviations used (see also List of abbreviations and acronyms). I arranged private meetings and attended formal ones, I talked to informants on the phone, travelled in cars with them, and observed them as they worked and socialised. I also went to private views, gallery talks, pubs, cafes, events, public forums, seminars/lectures and conferences. The empirical period was preceded by seven months planning and negotiation in which I attempted to gain access to the SAC, and on refusal, subsequently negotiated permission to work with CEC. The SAC decision was not surprising as it is a high profile government quango. It was sensitive about its public profile and did not want to become the subject of further scrutiny. The fieldwork period in earnest extended for many months beyond August 1999 -- conflicts about when and whether to cleanly sever the research period are not uncommon when conducting ethnographic work -- in more or less concentrated form. I adopted the term participant observation (Bryman and Burgess, 1994; Hertz and Imber, 1995) to describe my activities, mainly because my research conformed to the basic principles of this method and involved undertaking actual tasks whilst working alongside informants. I designed an information pack for visual

artists, contributed to the annual grants review, and assessed a National Lottery application, for instance. My presence did imprint itself on the field, and in relation to the National Lottery application, my assessment actually contributed to the rejection of a bid for funding. I make no claim to passivity or invisibility therefore, and do not hold with the generally discredited view that ethnographic environments are pristine surfaces either untouched before or after the researcher's intervention. Positivistic notions of contamination, detachment, prediction, operationalisation, and typicality, were all challenged (Okely, 1994).

I was initially based in the Arts Development Section of the Recreation Department, CEC, which at the time was located in Baileyfield Depot, a grim little industrial estate in Portobello about three miles east along the coast from central Edinburgh. If, as Hunter (1995) maintains, physical structures and the architectural skin of an organisation are an indication of status and power, the enforced move from the Royal Mile to Baileyfield in 1998, was harsh evidence of a gradual slide from grace being experienced by the Recreation Department (see chapter six). Actual time spent in Baileyfield was limited, however, as I often accompanied the arts officers on their travels into town to attend meetings. I also secured access to the Arts and Heritage Division, CEC (which was temporarily based in a Victorian school in Leith in the north of the city whilst its normal home, the City Art Centre, was being renovated). In March 1999, I started to work with one of the curators from this department. Towards the end of that month, the department moved back to the City Art Centre which meant I was then based in the heart of 'the gallery mile' which also hosts the Fruitmarket Gallery, the Collective Gallery, Stills, and Talbot Rice Gallery.

Much of my time was spent moving between these two council departments as well as working in a wide variety of contexts related to the visual arts scene generally. As I did not want to restrict myself to any particular institutional or a tightly conceived focus, this gave me the capacity to respond spontaneously to events and opportunities as they unfolded. In this sense the shape and pattern of the fieldwork was fairly organic and the focus and direction of research was dictated by patterns of interest beyond my control. As it happened, for instance, with the progress of time I became more involved with the Collective and Fruitmarket Galleries, most



particularly in relation to hanging the exhibitions they put on as part of a series of contemporary art exhibitions entitled *Contemporary Focus* on which the above five galleries collaborated. I was concurring with Okely's (1994) view: anthropological research is not premised on a strict hypothesis or on pre-set neatly-honed questions. I balanced the uncertain flow of events with my own evolving sense of focus, direction and purpose.

My work demanded much time in one-to-one and group conversations and meetings with arts officers, artists, administrators, marketing personnel, education officers, and gallery managers. I attended a variety of engagements such as professional meetings, conferences, lectures and seminars, discussion and forums, gallery talks, social meetings, hanging exhibitions and private views (see Appendix). I tended to keep quiet during professional meetings as it was not appropriate for me to influence agenda proceedings as an observer rather than representative of a related professional body. I did have interesting discussions with individuals before and after these occasions, however. Lectures, seminars, conferences and public forums followed a similar pattern. I would diligently record as much of the discussion as I could, seated among those present, and then take the opportunity to clarify issues raised and elicit individual opinion when formal proceedings were complete. In contrast less formal events such as social meetings in a cafe or pub, exhibition hangings and private views were more participatory. While there were fleeting opportunities to simply stand or sit and observe those around me, I spent most of the time engaged in conversation either in a group or with an individual. My notepad would remain on the table, or in my pocket/bag for most of the time but I would also openly take notes when it felt appropriate. These would be expanded upon at the first opportunity to do so in a discrete way. With practice I became quite adept at memorising entire conversations for a short period of time. Failure to take notes promptly would be punished by an increasingly patchy recollection of discussions. Diligence is key to good ethnographic practice.

I did not conduct any formal recorded interviews (I did record a number of public meetings). I deliberately avoided formal recorded interviews as I was interested in gathering material on discourses about art as they emerged within the arts network as

part of a working practice, and felt that the formality of interviewing would have encouraged a degree of posturing which might detract from the fluidity and spontaneity of these statements. I generated a large amount of primary data which took months to transcribe, code, and put through HyperResearch qualitative data software. Interview material would have significantly added to this time consuming task while also providing material I did not think was necessary. While typing up pages of hand written observations I devised 13 primary coding sets (see Appendix). These sets were further demarcated into 126 coding categories. The 126 codes were subsequently divided thematically according to broad chapter outlines, analysed and worked into draft chapter form. My difficulty was having too much, rather than too little material to work with. As a consequence of this inclusive approach, data collection and analysis was demanding and it was also difficult to contain the volume of material when writing up. While I believe this approach offers a broad and robust reading of the field, more discriminating note taking would help to combat the extra work involved.

As is apparent from Figure 1, I did not work with any commercial galleries. This was partly because I was most interested in the discourses and practices surrounding publicly funded art. Further, commercial galleries did not actively emerge as a presence within the Edinburgh arts network, and as such their significance to those I was concentrating on appeared to be minimal. Again, I was guided by the research field itself rather than my own ideas about likely points of significance, an approach not dissimilar to the grounded theory espoused by Glaser and Strauss and others (cited in Hertz and Imber, 1995; Bryman, 1994).

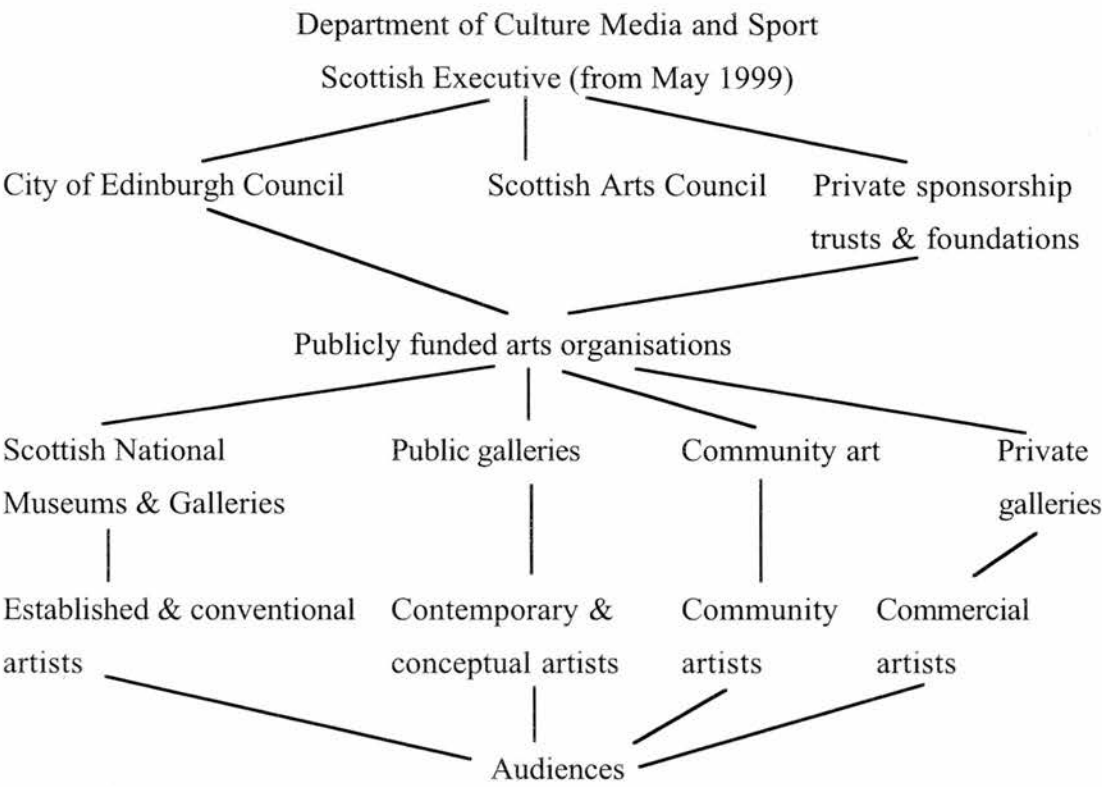
In addition to undertaking participant observation, I gathered and read policy documents (Department of Culture Media and Sport [hereafter DCMS], Scottish Executive, local government, SAC, Scottish Enterprise, and so on), as well as CEC and SAC administrative, planning, funding, and research papers. I also compiled files of hundreds of newspaper cuttings -- from *The Scotsman*, *Evening News* and *The Guardian* -- recorded radio and television programmes, and collated publicity material and catalogues from the galleries mentioned above. Written material was not strictly analysed using the 126 coding categories, although similar themes framed this

analysis. I would not call such material 'secondary sources' as this implies a false scale of significance placing human accounts above the written word, the media, administrative processes, and creative objects. Unsettling, or at least, questioning the hierarchical ordering of knowledge sources was fundamental to my methodological approach. In the following section I discuss this through my use of Actor Network Theory which Bruno Latour himself described as "... a powerful tool to destroy spheres and domains, to regain the sense of heterogeneity and to bring inter objectivity back into the centre of attention" (Latour, 1997, p. 13).

### **Hybrid states**

Having outlined the basic methods used, I provide a theoretical justification for these choices in the following sections. In the course of planning and undertaking this research I faced a second challenge -- how to develop the means to appreciate the specificity of connections between the different aspects of the Edinburgh art world. What/who are the key actors, how do they relate together exactly, and what roles do they perform? As a first attempt to address these questions, I compiled an inventory of the main actors in the network, and Figure 1 provides a visualisation of the formal lines of accountability and funding distribution which structured this network.

Figure 1: The Edinburgh arts network I (funding and accountability)



This illustration represents a very conventional reading of the relationships between the different government departments, funding agencies, galleries, artists, and audiences. It implies a hierarchy of influence, distribution and effect, running from the DCMS and Scottish Executive down to audiences. It fails to illustrate the broken and hesitant manner in which power and influence may be fed around the network and between the different actors, or to illuminate particularly weak and strong relationships and the time over which they work. No fluidity of interaction, of cause and effect, is supposed. The picture is static, one dimensional and inflexible. It implies an uneven distribution of power along hierarchical lines, and does not illuminate discrepancies or points of resistance. Further, the diagram reduces the relationship between the different actors to one crude instrumental factor -- funding -- thus conforming to standard accounts which privilege finance as the primary determining factor in analyses of public art. Correspondingly, it neglects the role of other human and non-human factors. The assumptions which underpin the diagram, and similar accounts, actually hide more than they reveal. I want to find a more

effective way of understanding how these actors inter-related. To do this I need to explore the space between the bold intersecting lines, and bring forward the ill-fitting elements which awkwardly refused to conform to this neat reading of the field. I will illustrate how I approached this challenge.

When formulating an integrated methodological approach to understanding these questions, I moved away from the very arts-specific focus noted in chapter one to draw on more generalised theories of power, structure, agency, and culture. I looked initially at Pred's (1995) work on montage, which is similar to Benjamin's *Arcades Project* (1999). Pred juxtaposes verbal and visual fragments, quotations, reports, anecdotes, jokes, song lyrics and ethnographic evidence into a 'creative geography'. He presents a totality of fragments without closure or stability. Polyphonic writing in this style aligns different discursive surfaces together placing opposing discourses in conflict with each other. It also avoids first person narrative, displaces the formal authority of the author and passes critique onto informers (Gusterson, 1995). Pred's strategy of radical heterogeneity, although interesting, also lacks systematic intent or critical decisiveness. I was more attracted to dialogical strategies (Gusterson, 1995) which do not define a final 'truth', but which do celebrate the particularity of the researchers' perspective as partial, and allow for the maintenance of a separate vantage point. Gusterson uses Haraway to suggest that this is not a conflict but a conversation -- I look at the displacement of formal authority below.

Given my growing interest in the lively interchange between actors it seemed appropriate to return to Latour's narrative of modernity. I hoped he would provide a framework for understanding how the actors in figure 1. related together. Latour states that the modern world has never actually materialised as moderns have failed to make the world function according to the logic of its own official constitution, namely that of separations. He argues that the world is in actuality characterised by seamlessness rather than separation. Therefore modernity is not simply a deceptive plot, false consciousness or an illusion, it just has not had the power to force into being a vision it can no longer entirely believe in or hold together. The paradox of the moderns is that the modern constitution has covertly gained from its inability to separate humans and non-humans or to bracket off God, and this failure has

conversely led to an amplification of contacts and the proliferation of hybrid states. This growth was facilitated by the idea of a transcendent nature, free society and the absence of divinity. Indeed, “the less the moderns think they are blended, the more they blend .... The more science is absolutely pure, the more it is intimately bound up with the fabric of society” (Latour, 1991, p. 43).

What was interesting here from my own point of view was the proposal that modern society inadvertently creates integrated collectives, made up simultaneously of ‘social’ and ‘physical’ relations which it neither acknowledges or conceptualises as such. Could it be that the arts network also concealed important aspects of its overall make-up, and if so, how could I draw these into my research account? Where social scientists have adopted and studied the world through the framework of modern dualisms, Latour implies we should be more inclusive and take into account all those elements we have traditionally separated or made invisible to research projects. Not only does this accommodate a more eclectic approach to the theoretical foundations of research, it also encourages the simultaneous consideration of resources with people, politics with policy, social ideals with art, and what Latour himself explains as the seamless fabric which is ‘nature-culture’. I refer to these actors as ‘material’ as this acknowledges both their material presence/agency and their derivative status. They are objects but they also express human meaning. Again I returned to the theme of boundaries as I strove to reconstitute traditional notions of borders into a more inclusive understanding based on multiple lines of significance which connected factors together rather than separated them apart. Within this approach, there exists countless small divides rather than one great divide as advocated in universalist accounts. Rather than being absolute and irreconcilable as proposed in the relativist account, these differences also accompany and rely on, rather than oppose one another. A middle way was beginning to emerge.

Bruno Latour (1991) suggests that academics, and specifically ethnographers, need to attend to the existence of hybrid states which proliferate between, for instance, the false distinctions moderns create between agency and structure, subject and object. By exposing the points of continuity and discontinuity between apparently opposing categories a Latourian approach makes it possible to disturb the creation of



binary oppositions and problematise the ordering logic which creates, for instance, culture as objective and viewed (art) and culture as subjective and experienced (life). Latour's notion of hybrid states and the existence of partial effects is central to his thesis, and was a useful tool for appreciating the inconsistency of practice on which my theoretical dilemma was based. His example of the moderns' duality between subject and object was therefore of interest as a critical tool through which to observe the ways in which distinctions of various kinds are confidently asserted (purification), and/or surreptitiously integrated (mediation) in actions such as funding agreements between the council and arts clients. The moderns work of purification would seek to maintain analytic distance between these entities, but Latour argues that the existence of hybrid states, in this case how resistance from artists penetrates the coherence of 'rational' institutional agendas, should be acknowledged rather than denied by the researcher.

Methodologically this approach demanded a certain self-consciousness towards the editing of material, to applying significance to what I left out as well as to what I included, and to problematising simple categorisations and judgements. It also encouraged me to account for inconsistencies and the 'inconvenient' aspects of my research data. I questioned, for instance, the apparent uniformity of arts officers as a professional category by accommodating individual opinions (chapter six). Latourian method does not allow for convenient bracketing off or the superimposing of an *a priori* system of thought onto the material at hand. He offers a critique of modernity and the separations it imposes which enabled me to construct the field from a new perspective, sensitive to and positioned within the 'in-between' spaces. Rather than isolate apparently different practices such as the community arts tradition, strategic initiatives like Best Value, the promotion of Edinburgh as a capital city, and friendship-based networks, Latour's work on hybridisation helped me to address the links between these diverse factors as part of my research practice. I hoped to provide a more existential account of cultural planning and development, one which would highlight the randomness and temporality of decision making as well as investigate its apparently systematic intent. Attention was also paid to the multiple links between practices, the intersecting influences and disjunctions as well as the continuously negotiated character of mutual actions.



## Power and integrated networks

I now need to work out how these actors and hybrid states accumulate into wider networks of activity. By elaborating an account of order conceived as multilayered and encompassing “different types of events differing in amplitude, chronological breadth, and capacity to produce effects”, Foucault liberates exceptional and experiential instances from the ordered or mundane (Foucault, 1980, p. 114).

Similarly, Actor Network Theory [hereafter ANT] takes the position that universality and order are not ‘the rule but the exception’ and therefore it is concerned with the irreducible, inconsistent and the local. Building on the Foucauldian account of micro-powers, ANT maintains that rather than modern society functioning through “levels, layers, territories, spheres, categories, structures and systems”, it gains momentum by dissemination through diverse, inter-woven systems or networks (Latour, 1997, p. 2). ANT was originally developed through the work of the Paris group of science and technology studies with members such as Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and British academic John Law. Whilst different accounts have developed, the most prominent proponent is Latour. He presents ANT as an alternative to social constructionism by arguing it is “better equipped to deal with the non-social and the non-human - to integrate them into an analytic framework that attends to the mutual construction of the social and the non-social, the human and the non-human” (Michael, 1997, p. 51).

ANT revitalises Foucault’s work on relations of power by highlighting the ways in which power is given form and is extended through a capacity to mobilise, align and enrol a variety of disparate materials and actors. Power is not then a cause but a consequence of action, it cannot be explained by tracing big effects directly back to big causes. It is conceived more as an arrangement of associations gained through assent, rather than a fact to be possessed. Power is viewed in active terms, for instance as the social, political and personal resources which make up the work of any given funding agency. In line with the Foucauldian position, power is regarded as positive and generative, operating through detailed local mechanisms which gain consent rather than attach themselves onto others. As Mike Michael explains:

The purpose of ANT is to unravel what keeps these large actors together, to show how they are networks which need to be repaired and reproduced moment by moment by their constituent actors... ANT moves towards uncovering the conditions by which such networks come to be stabilised: it reveals their history and their inner workings with the express aim of showing how things could have been different (Michael, 1997, p. 62).

In chapter four, for instance, I note how artists' commitment to the autonomy of art is mobilised to unify disparate artistic communities. I also trace the means -- public statements, private conversations, written texts, arts practices -- through which this discourse is continually replenished. ANT conceives of networks as bundles of associations and inter-relationships, sets of enabling conditions which are durable but potentially unreliable. Instability can result from a challenge to the roles and identities of one entity by another, and the essential heterogeneity of the network has consequences for movement between those negotiating the semiotic character of the network. Obligatory points of passage can also be monopolised by actors affording them pivotal status as they translate and distribute information to other actors in the network. As a case in point, by using funding agreements which challenge autonomous artistic ideals, funding agencies emerge as key mediators within the Edinburgh arts network.

Whilst Michael criticises Latour and Callon for writing up networks in some of their own research as too coherent, with multiple actors "rendered singular by the flow of the narrative", there is contained within the notion of networks a flexibility which I found more capable of accounting for indeterminacy, contradiction and marginality than previous methods (Michael, 1997, p. 63). Foucault (1971), for instance, explores categories of inclusion such as the space of reason embodied by the family and society, and exclusion, such as the space of unreason denoted by asylums. He attempts to link the operation of power and knowledge to the places within which they operate. The boundaries which divide the sane from the insane thus function as spatial relationships. This historical impulse to separate the mad and the sane into social and spatial units, is illustrative of Latour's point about moderns' separation tactics. While Foucault is content with projecting a clear geometric distinction onto

his historical material, it is evident that this polarisation cannot accommodate moments of sanity within the asylum or flashes of insanity within the home. Foucault's perception of power is too prescriptive in this regard. In contrast, the Latourian account which argues that everything is included or excluded at some point within a network, offers a more sophisticated treatment of inclusion and exclusion, powerlessness and power, local and global, than Foucault's dualistic opposition. Latour's geography which renounces a clear sense of centre and margin also helped me to overcome the feeling common to many ethnographers that the centre of the action, the 'real' pulse of the community is elsewhere. It gave me the confidence to regard my particular research activities as worthy of academic consideration.

Within ANT actors are regarded as multiple and have multiple membership and associations across networks. Whilst they may be marginal to one network they will also be central to another, thereby challenging reductive accounts of inclusion and exclusion. Rather than simply regard artists as victims of circumstance, for example, this realisation encouraged me to view them as also having powerful agency.

People inhabit many different domains at once ... and the negotiation of identities, within and across groups, is an extraordinarily complex and delicate task. It's important not to presume either unity of single membership, either in the mingling of humans and non-humans or amongst humans. We are all marginal in some regard, as members of more than one community of practice (social world) (Latour, 1991, p. 52).

Latour does not pathologise an unequal distribution of power between actors or argue for absolute equality, instead he proposes that just as the global is local at some points or sections of a network, so too in some contexts every actor is powerful or powerless.<sup>3</sup> When applied in practice I was able to develop a more nuanced reading of different individuals and institutions. This coding process clearly revealed these internal differences as data about individual actors spread across diverse coding categories. The CEC emerged as a particularly paradoxical organisation. ANT treats power, identity and marginality as inseparable from networks, associations and local

<sup>3</sup> Latour (1993) argues that by thinking in terms of networks we can dispense with the 'tyranny of distance' and geographical proximity. A technical system like a railway network is 'local' at every point, it is also 'global' as it spans great distances, but it is not universal or absolute as it cannot take you everywhere. The notion of networks disperses the spatial metaphors of centre and margin, local and global, and near and far, by reinterpreting vertical separations as associations and connections.

contexts, and therefore actors may embody multiple identities and differing levels of status simultaneously, never totally included or excluded. This view of power as practice, defined through action, based on associations, never wholly present or absent, offered a flexibility which could on the one hand account for how powerful interests operate *as* diverse institutional arrangements (not as a prior entity fed through institutions) as well as accommodate the degree of contingency which characterises the shifting balance of power. I found that during local government budget rounds, arts officers contemplated the level of cuts different grant clients were to receive, middle management made decisions about departmental redundancies, councillors juggled departmental and corporate budgets in line with central government restrictions, and so on. At every point in this cycle, different actors were able to assert influence over others whilst being dependent on other actors around them.

The criss-crossing and conflicting pull of priorities between different actors is perplexing, and accounting for the relative power of one actor in relation to another is impossible. As the above example illustrates, while arts officers may initially be regarded as exercising a substantial degree of power over grant clients, in practice this was clearly not the case, they were vulnerable to the different factors at work within the broader network. At any stage officers had to work according to: particular target groups, geographical and regeneration priorities; corporate as well as Recreation Department strategies; central government directives; public and client priorities; different art forms; individual councillor priorities, and their own personal development values. I realised that ideas, objects, policies, environments and people should be seen as integrated within the same network, part of the same collective living process. In such a way, perceptual categories, symbolic practices, resources and objects are part of a mutual 'process of being'. Arts professionals, the cultural work they do, the political climate they operate within and the city they live in are all caught up together, at once separable and the same at different points in the network.

Using ANT I had begun to formulate the notion that my field of study actually consisted of this network of interactions, and that the substance of what I was looking for resided in the relationships themselves, in the discourses, objects and

resources which moved between the different actors. Their contributions to this network and attempts to perpetuate their own positions within it, became the substance of my research. The elusive phantoms of my lifeless diagram began to creep into view.

## **The researcher and their knowledge**

My third challenge accentuates the particular investment researchers have in undertaking research, and the ways they adapt prior ideals to 'local' circumstances. According to Clifford (cited in Pierce, 1995) ethnographers automatically exercise textual and social authority over those they study, and research texts produce subjectivities in an unequal exchange between researchers and 'natives'. Pierce (1995) notes that ethnographic authority is not, however, clear cut: arguing the researcher's power changes relative to the field under study. This problematises the simplistic rendition of researcher as 'dominant' and subject as 'subordinate'. I found this a useful qualifier when tempted to either overstate or understate the asymmetry of my research relationships. Indeed, at different points during field work I did feel more or less 'in control'. For example, many of those whom I studied were highly educated and self-aware and they were keen to ensure their views were represented. At times my attention was monopolised by particularly tenacious individuals, a fact which makes ethnographic work particularly unlikely to be representative.

In using ethnographic techniques emphasis is placed on the researcher as the "primary research instrument" (Walsh, 1998, p. 217). Positivist notions of neutrality and objectivity have been challenged over the years, and the burden of proof and rigour of the method rests almost entirely on the analytic integrity of the researcher. Much of the evidence produced is taken on trust (Okely, 1994). As Geertz notes, ethnographic findings are not privileged, just 'particular', and the material that we call our data is in fact "really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to ... We are already explicating; and worse, explicating explications. Winks upon winks upon winks" (Geertz, 1973, p. 9).

It is impossible, therefore, fully to integrate the field of study (empirical content)

with the study itself (representation/construction). Consequently, the ethnographer should acquire a self-consciousness about the types of representation they construct, and the fictions they write about others. The researcher should treat the field more as a semantic text to interpret and not as a social mechanism or cipher to solve. The search is for the meaning of cultural webs rather than for laws or systematic rules through which to explain, reify or reduce them.

The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong... But to regard such forms as “saying something of something,” and saying it to somebody, is at least to open up the possibility of an analysis which attends to their substance rather than to reductive formulas professing to account for them (Geertz, 1973, pp. 452-3).

The emphasis Geertz places on observation as text in his interpretative approach positions the researcher as a kind of literary critic, “sorting out structures of signification ... and determining their social ground and import” (Geertz, 1973, p. 9). In practice, this means significant aspects of the editing process are instantaneous. In my case, I made snap decisions about what to include/exclude as I scribbled down notes whilst observing events or during conversations. As such, my research was actively constitutive rather than passively or transparently reflexive of the field (Rose, 1997b). Research priorities emerged through experiencing, thinking and rethinking as I went along. Analysis was an ongoing and creative act with themes surfacing unpredictably during and after fieldwork. As with Okely (1994), my research combined action and contemplation.

Following Geertz, the recording and analytic process involved interpreting the flow of social discourse around me whilst attempting to rescue and write what was ‘said’ from the passing event. My note-taking constantly reminded those I was working with that they were under observation/construction. Yet it also reinforced my own realisation that I was a researcher rather than a fellow professional or indigenous participant. I did not desire or feel that sameness was necessary or possible. Junker (1960) identified four potential observer roles for the ethnographer consisting of ‘complete participant’, ‘complete observer’, ‘participant as observer’, and ‘observer as participant’. I found myself oscillating between the latter two roles, always



openly maintaining my identity as an observer. Both I and my informants seemed comfortable with these roles, and my note-taking became part of the 'normal' currency of our relationship. I was rarely obliged to resort to the urgency of the 'anthropologist's bladder', and indeed, on many occasions during meetings or professional seminars, I was one of a few people taking notes and, consequently, appeared less conspicuous.

In addition to 'observation notes' taken during the day, I often spent time at the end of the day, or sometimes at quiet points during the day, to reflect on unfolding events. These 'interpretive notes' became the basis upon which I built my analysis, and provided insights and timely reactions to the research field. They also enabled me to maintain some distance analytically and administratively, between my representations of others, and expression of my own ideas. In many ways, however, given the intimacy of ethnographic work and its unapologetic reliance on the perceptual frameworks of the researcher, this distinction between what 'they' and I were thinking was untenable. This merging of subjective positions was further confused by my ongoing status -- one way or another -- as a member of the Edinburgh art world. Whilst researcher and researched cannot merge, the reflections of both are mirrored in the face of the other.

Familiarity with this research context did to some extent eradicate the strangeness and incoherence that Shutz (1964) argues strangers experience when entering the habitual world of the research field (cited in Searle, 1998, p. 218). The taken-for-granted laws, customs, habits, and consumption patterns of my informants were, at least in part, synonymous with my own life and social capital. Further, the fact of my ongoing presence within the arts community as audience and ex-professional, also blurred any decisive movement from previous to current participant. For instance, I found myself drawing on previous knowledge about individuals and organisations, and whilst I met many new people and became familiar with different aspects of the arts network, there were also individuals with whom I had previous relationships, and who had undoubtedly formed opinions about me independent from the research context. Contrary to positivistic conventions, I actually valued and productively used the fact that my research was a contaminated process.



For example, I quickly became aware of how important pre-existing attitudes towards me were for facilitating access to the field, and I was particularly reliant on the kindness of key individuals with whom I had previously worked (Appendix, 34, IN). Familiarity was a comfort as well as an advantage methodologically. It gave me the courage to make connections, pursue possibilities, and move into situations I would otherwise have found difficult. The majority of those I worked with were accommodating and generous with their time. I was also offered unprecedented access to internal meetings, documents, administrative processes, and working practices within the Council.

At other times, however, this closeness obscured my ability to identify the social operations being practised (Appendix, 24, IN). I had, for example, real difficulty undertaking any meaningful analysis of private exhibition views beyond trite remarks about cultural homogeneity and exclusivity. I did not, however, want to bury these processes simply because they were 'known' to me. As such, I found intimacy also worked against analysis. Ethnographers have wrestled with this dilemma since notions of empathy and immersion first gained credence as methodological devices. Researchers hopelessly aspire towards familiarity and objectivity. Inevitably however, we revert to subjective interpretations, the inescapable mesh through which all is absorbed.

I now turn to consider the extent to which ethnographers should maintain and/or insert their intellectual resources onto the research field. To what extent should I adapt long-held theoretical principles, for instance? According to Marcus (1992), realist ethnography utilises extraction techniques which subject and translate key symbols or concepts into the authoritative analytic scheme of the ethnographer. This method contextualises with reference to a semiotic or cultural totality. Marcus outlines a modernist approach to ethnography which understands how the play of structures and unintended consequences shape a domain, but does not require a linking theory of structure as a determination process. It refuses to impose the orderly onto the disorderly, and keeps alive the uncompromisingly ambiguous relationship between world and experience, text and reality, structure and action

(Marcus, 1992). Methodologically this involved systematically arranging fragments together in order to reveal a logic of connections, the sum of which is always questionable. I realised that it was acceptable to feel unsettled about my data, that there was no finite end to analysis, and that my conclusions would necessarily be unresolved.

The Marcus approach has as its purpose the alteration of the ethnographer's own concepts in a reflexive manner. Reflexivity, as Rose notes (1997b), is a contentious practice and one which too often assumes the transparent uncovering of prior identities, rather than the constitutive making of meaning through performance and the research process itself. In Marcus's reading, the ethnographer's framework should not remain intact, or 'solid' to use Marx/Berman's term, particularly given that their subject matter is similarly perceived to 'melt into air'. The modernist sense of the real assumes an increasingly integrated globe resulting in a diversity of connections among phenomena which are, paradoxically, difficult to comprehend in totality (Marcus 1992). Through Marcus we arrive at a recognition of diversity, interconnectivity, fluidity, and the vulnerability of the researcher as one of many voices, at once experiencing their environment, but also unable to completely grasp or articulate it. In a sense, the closer I looked the more I realised I had to learn. Given my familiarity with the research field, it was particularly important to remain open to new experiences and perspectives.

Foucault (1991) discusses how the disciplinary procedures which organise social spaces are refined and extended into vast and complex systems such as the judicial apparatus constructed by the Enlightenment. He is equally suspicious of the certainties which are supposed by 'structurally inclined' social scientists, and is particularly distracted by their need for coherence, truth and reason. Foucault moves attention from the researcher to the epistemological status of what they research, claiming that: "There is no ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted [but an] ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and there are specific effects of power attached to these truths" (Foucault cited in Rabinow, 1986, p. 8). Driving this critique of rationality is an attack on *a priori* modes of thinking and what he terms 'total history' (Foucault, 1972, pp. 9-

10). Total history operates on the basis of networks of causality, the rigid periodisation of history encapsulated in 'great units' both spatial and temporal, and imposes grand totalising theories which account for diversity through a central analytic core such as capitalism, economism, culture, and so on. As an alternative to the coherence enforced by the total historians, Foucault forges a notion of general history, or genealogy, which acknowledges the contradictions of everyday life and disputes notions of a 'totalising centre'. He encourages us as researchers to take on the work of the 'specific intellectual' (cited in Rabinow, 1986), immersing ourselves within the immediate, accounting for the prohibitive functions of localised networks, and according place to their peculiar demands. This proved helpful in identifying an acceptable balance between the theoretical order of the general, and the fragmented nature of the specific. Rather than simply note swings in national policy priorities for instance, I also recorded the manner in which these could be undermined and diluted locally. Essentially, Foucault calls for any theory building project to be woven from and through the detailed practice of specific instances: "Genealogy ... requires patience and a knowledge of details, and it depends on a vast accumulation of source material. Its 'cyclopean monuments' are constructed from 'discrete and apparently insignificant truths and according to a rigorous method'; they cannot be the product of 'large and well-meaning errors'" (Foucault cited in Rabinow, 1986, pp. 76-77). As already noted, however, utilising such a refined method of data collection proved labour intensive. Involvement with this material inevitably changed many previously held views and assumptions, but it also consolidated others. The challenge was to remain alert to this dialogue between existing and emerging understandings, and to avoid imposing larger 'truths' onto the specifics of my research field.

There is an interesting similarity between Foucault's critique of total history, and Clifford Geertz's questioning of what he terms "very general, made-in-the-academy concepts" (Geertz, 1973, p. 151). Geertz focuses a similar critique on anthropological approaches which seek to discover the logical order which constructs any given 'reality'. He argues that, "To set forth symmetrical crystals of significance, purified of the material complexity in which they were located, and then attribute their existence to autogenous principles of order, universal properties of the human mind, or vast, a priori *weltanschauungen*, is to pretend a science that does not exist and

imagine a reality that cannot be found” (Geertz, 1973, p. 20). Geertz also provides guidance on how to pursue an inclusive locally constructed approach ethnographically. His alternative approach is to “trace the life of signs in society, not in an invented world of dualities, transformation, parallels, and equivalences”, but through interpretative descriptions of the flow of social discourses (Geertz, 1993, p. 109). Such an approach does not deal in realities, pathologies, or generalised causes, but in processes and local significances within which we can begin to “locate in the tenor of their setting the sources of their spell” (Geertz, 1983a, p. 120). Viewed in such a way, apparently incidental administrative processes take on real cultural significance, for example. While Foucault encouraged me to build theoretical assertions from immediate empirical instances, Geertz encouraged interest in mapping the flow of social discourses through different kinds of actors. This approach complements the Latourian notion of networks, as theory, power and meaning all reside within the same network of actors.

Drawing on Foucault and Geertz, it is apparent that the setting of my enquiry is not predetermined, and it can only contain generalisable interpretations when these are made through “exceedingly extended acquaintances with extremely small matters” (Geertz, 1973, p. 21). This involves enabling the research field to reveal its own significances by avoiding presupposing what will be worth investigating. This introduces an element of chance and vulnerability to research planning and execution, but it also results in a more responsive and sympathetic portrait of the field. This is not the world in miniature, the great captured in the small, but the small existing as and interpreted as the small. The research field is a ‘sensible actuality’, highly circumstantial, realistic and concrete. To this end I attempt to render the arts network accessible according to its own terms and to construct formulations about its cultures and symbolic systems which are ‘actor-oriented’. The notion of artistic autonomy, for instance, is studied through close reference to the particular individuals and institutions which facilitate it, and not according to rigid, hierarchical or oppositional structures, and pre-existing frameworks. Both Geertz and Foucault are concerned with the densely layered substance of the social order, and both are equally aware of the dangers of any method which penetrates, applies hierarchies and exaggerates the significance of small things in order to render them coherent according to some/an

‘academic’ pretext. By so doing I do not displace my own epistemological authority, rather, I acknowledge the active but responsive role I play as one actor among others.

## **Discourses and subjects**

In establishing a more critical appreciation of my own contribution to the research process as ‘story teller’ and ‘embedded observer’, I am also concerned with understanding the intersection between the cultures of those I study and the types of practices, management and policies they are engaged with. As noted in chapter one, the “aesthetic eye” is for Bourdieu a product of history reproduced by education (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 3). For Bourdieu, classificatory schemes are not simply a matter of objective interest, but are our whole social being, everything which defines who we are and who we and others think we are. The job of the researcher is, therefore, to investigate the practical implementation of perceptual schemes and to trace how these mental structures may link into the objective divisions within a given social formation. But how could I actually investigate the links between individual thought, social structures and practical action? De Certeau acknowledged the enormity of this task when noting that “the ways of thinking embedded in ways of operating constitute a strange-and massive-case of the relations between practices and theories” (de Certeau, 1992, p. 45). Further, there are immediate problems with Bourdieu’s approach to this problematic, such as the assumption of clear lines of causality between structure, thought and action. His model of embodied taxonomies is problematic as it would be extremely difficult to research without simplifying the real divisions (actual social structures) themselves, and then failing to appreciate the intricacies of the embodying process whereby ‘objective’ structure becomes mental structure. It would also be difficult to find any clarity between the countless systems of thought which operate in conscious, contaminated, and mutually reinforcing or opposing ways.

Notwithstanding the above reservations, Bourdieu’s ideas and approach provide a platform for appreciating how aesthetic perceptions are internally codified, how competencies are connected to practices and habitus, and how strategies of classification function materially as hierarchies of class and signifiers of social



difference. I was thus able to broadly consider how such competencies were generated, how they operated, what they signified, and what effects they had within the context of the Edinburgh art world. For example, when researching arts management discourses I looked at the political and professional contexts framing arts management practices, tracked CEC administrative procedures, assessed different attitudes towards these procedures, and traced their effects on the arts profession (chapter six). Although effective as a means to broadly connect institutional discourses, to particular structures, practices, and effects, Bourdieu's approach does not, however, adequately conceptualise the relationship between individual patterns of thought and institutional actions.

In contrast, the governmentality themes developed by Foucault (1991) are useful for explaining how self-rule is related to the rule of others. A clear parallel is evident between this notion and my own ideas about the culture of the producers themselves and the institutional promotion of culture. Foucault focuses on the forms of rule created by institutions, and the technologies of the self through which individuals govern and indeed actively create their own subjectivity. The relationship between government power and the individual is regarded as fluid in this account, and the individual is accorded an active and consensual rather than a stupefied or objectified role. As such government power is reconceived as subjectifying rather than objectifying (Garland, 1997, p.175). Government processes cultivate particular forms of subjectivity such as types of audiences and arts officers in line with specific institutional aims. Government power relies on a network of professional enclosures and voluntary alliances. Power is translated by individuals and so extends beyond the state (Rose, 1996). This understanding enables researchers to view individual subjectivity and action as powerful and active, without dismissing the determining nature of the structures they are a part of. This provides a framework through which to consider how the "practices of governing others link up with the practices by which individuals govern themselves" (Garland, 1997, p. 176). During field work I was careful, for instance, to note how the attitudes of CEC officers actively affected the types of administrative processes they promoted. By highlighting the pivotal role of active subjects, governmentality reduces the division between the history of ideas (as progressed by individuals) and the history of social institutions (Barnett, 2001,



p.7).

By regarding individuals as active the concept of governmentality also enables researchers to challenge “a fundamental vocabulary of opposition and resistance” (Barnett, 2001, p.10). In chapter six, for instance, I illustrate how CEC officers neither entirely supported or resisted the administrative frameworks they instituted. Mental structures are thus attached to institutional paradigms in a less didactic or polemic manner. Governmentality displaces the simplistic power/resistance problematic with one centred upon strategic games between liberties (Barnett, 2001, p.18). This is a typical Foucauldian paradox, but one which usefully acknowledges the complicated relationships individuals have with governing institutions as sources of both power and dependency.

The interplay between the institutional promotion of particular cultural forms and the encultured subjectivities of practitioners themselves also threw up a wealth of questions relating to the practice of art as both a ‘public’ and ‘private’ enterprise. Indeed, ethnography proved particularly adept at drawing out the differences between public statement and private opinion. The role and place of individual opinion and personal interactions within institutional processes are explored in detail in chapter six. The governmentality approach therefore offered the means to examine how individual knowledge is linked to practice, and as such, how attitudes and particular sensibilities are simultaneously formed and enforced within the artistic field.

The idea of “governmental rationalities” refers .... to the ways of thinking and styles of reasoning that are embodied in a particular set of practices. It points to the forms of rationality that organise these practices, and supply them with their objectives and knowledge and forms of reflexivity. Rationalities are thus practical rather than theoretical or discursive entities (Garland, 1997, p. 184)

As Garland notes, the governmentality thesis sees rationalities as a logic of practice, not of analysis, as styles of reasoning and habits of mind and of action which are articulated in both explicit and implicit ways. One must not simply uncover and map



systems of thought, but attempt to understand how they function in practice, what they actually mean and what consequences they have. It was not enough for me to simply catalogue government discourses about art as contained within cultural policies. I had to look at how these values were embodied personally and enforced practically. This realisation proved most valuable when considering underlying attitudes towards non-traditional audiences and the artistic practices designed to serve these social groups (chapter four).

By utilising a method largely based upon intensive contact with a number of individuals, I avoided reducing the art world to a purely structural entity with quantifiable effects. Through these relationships I explored the profession as a personal and cultural practice enmeshed within broader semiotic contexts. In such a way actual effects, strategies and organisational practices are linked to the perceptual frameworks of practitioners themselves (Born, 1995), which are, in turn, generated within particular structural conditions. Discourses define practices which define discourses, operating in an endless circular motion, an integrated action.

## **Summary and conclusions**

Previous studies of art as a social system have tended to view the different aspects of the art world in isolation from each other. As a result, such studies have largely failed to appreciate the diverse means through which arts practice is constituted, and the variety of factors which contribute to its development. Research evidence should not, I want to argue, be artificially extracted from the context within which it takes its form and through which it gains its meaning. I have here traced the route through which I hope to devise a more contextualised methodological and conceptual approach to artistic production. Following Geertz, I have sought to implement an inclusive highly-textured account in which arts professionals, the cultured work they do, the political/policy environment they operate within, and the cities they live in, may be seen as caught up together as part of the same cultural web. I have sought to clarify my own presence as researcher and, therefore, as one of the primary actors in the construction of the tale I call the Edinburgh arts network. Consciousness about my input further consolidated my reticence towards positivistic notions of purity

and objectivity within research practice.

I have explored the intersection between the institutionalisation of culture and the ways in which the cultures of producers themselves become “institutionally crystallised”, to use a Foucauldian term (Foucault, 1981, pp. 92-93). I have laid out here a methodological approach which is intended to be sensitive to attitudes and sensibilities as simultaneously formed and enforced within given institutions, and the types of subjective possibilities which are generated and promoted (Green, 2002). In order that the role of material actors be considered within evolving networks of activity, I here use documentary sources alongside spoken discourses to advance an eclectic approach to the circulation of ideas. By refusing to straightforwardly discriminate between objects and subjects, I want to question the primacy of ‘pure’ human agency as the most authentic empirical source within qualitative research by attempting to reintroduce those elements which many researchers elect to subdue or discard as irrelevant to the ‘central’ story. Although I do not attempt to fully investigate the agency of material objects (Rose, 2001), art works, symbolic practices, ideas, policies, resources, administrative processes, galleries and people are integrated into the research enquiry as part of what Latour (1993) would call the ‘same living process’.<sup>4</sup> As such I acknowledge that the boundaries between human and material agency are unclear, and that although not fully understood, material objects do play a part. I also counteract the tendency for researchers to study either art works, policy documents, institutions or people as if they are mutually exclusive and either active or inactive. By accounting for the diverse organisational cultures, institutional arrangements and values of producers themselves, I have aspired towards a deeper regard for the variety of factors which contribute to the development and practice of art in Edinburgh.

By juxtaposing apparently unremarkable factors, I am concerned to allocate them the same priority, neither more nor less significance, and to illustrate non-hierarchical relationships between objects and the coequal existence of things large and small. As with Roussel’s detailed paintings, new meaning, significance and status is generated through the ordering of things in relation to each other (Philo, 1992). In what follows,

<sup>4</sup> Future research could usefully address questions around the line between agency and non-agency, and whether some objects (art works) have more agency than others (policy documents), for instance.

I develop the contention that action and order progress through the intersection of factors rather than through the isolation of categories, and by giving equal weight to the variety of constituent actors, highlighting the links between them, and viewing them within the terms of a broad relational context I attempted to pursue this aim. On the one hand I have problematised the unequal distribution of power between agencies, and the parallel layering of social phenomena into a hierarchy of relevance, but I have also indicated that within this there is still some kind of order.

I here draw upon Foucault's notion of the 'specific intellectual' to consolidate my commitment to theory as materialising through specific practice. Opinions about art do not resonate from one or two central or discernible points. Rather than attempt either to trace root causes or to uncover essential categories, I have sought to implement an approach which instead notes multiple lines of articulation and acquisition which may have either less predictable paths or coherent consequences. Chance occurrences have been reconnected to the 'orderly' structures within which they are enmeshed. This approach implies a shifting focus and the application of fresh angles and new perspectives in response to new significances as they are revealed through fieldwork. In such a way, I have tried to avoid research practices which establish a one-way, single track approach that positions the immovable gaze of the researcher on the static object they have elected to study in isolation from its context. I have, instead, been at pains at points to work within a dynamic method which works with the unpredictable rhythms of the research encounter and approaches what must be regarded as a diverse and complex field from multiple points of engagement. Responsive movement between different sources of evidence is central to this method. I have aspired to develop an integrated theory of cultural practice which dissolves what Latour has called false separations, whilst simultaneously including the 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) that makes up any culture and which gives meaning to the specific within it. In terms of method, this investigation involved intermingling diverse factors such as talk about art with choice of pigment, morality, policy, commerce, buildings, classificatory schemes, perceptions of community, institutional hierarchies, and so on, in order to appreciate how the construction and use of art is generated within seamless cultural networks. To paraphrase Geertz, art, the equipment used to grasp it and the use it is put to, are

all made in the same shop (1983b).

## The Edinburgh arts network

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The arts world is a snake pit, it's like a nest of vipers and no-one gets out unscathed (artist, Appendix, 181, C).

There also needs to be communication. There are a lot of actors (arts officer, Appendix, 29, C).

This chapter illustrates through example how visual art in Edinburgh consists of an integrated network of different discourses, institutions, collections of people, arts practices, and funding imperatives. I show how these factors in combination make up the arts network. Discourses, or thoughts about art, are one of the means through which the network takes its form, therefore. I provide a broad overview of key actors within the Edinburgh arts network, indicating what role they performed, how they related together and the influences and effects generated through their interactions. As such, I consolidate the methodological premise established in the previous chapter about connections and contextualisation (as opposed to isolation and extraction), and also add some life and body to the one-dimensional description of the field represented in Figure 1.

I shift away from Bourdieu's emphasis in *Distinction* (1996b) on gallery audiences to focus on those individuals and institutions which run the arts, examining the ways in which their status and tastes function to perpetuate certain professional and aesthetic structures, conventions and affiliations. Having looked at the broad political context and the state institutions governing the arts network, I provide a background to the

SAC before considering the cultural background and institutions which frame contemporary arts practice in Edinburgh. This nexus of influences and institutions are examined together using a collaborative exhibition as a case study. Of primary interest are the ways in which the character and shape of the art world itself is dictated not by clear consideration of artistic matters, but by the effects which result from each actor's efforts to maintain their own status within the network. Consideration is predominantly given to the intersection of networks -- government, funding agencies and art galleries -- within this chapter. Discussion of the interaction of particular discourses which underpin these networks appears in chapters four to six.

### **Setting the scene: New Labour and the Scottish Parliament**

To have a society in which there is no government support for the arts or culture would be a very barren civilisation (Smith, 1998, p. 18).<sup>1</sup>

Following Becker (1982), as discussed in chapter one, I first look at the role of government within the Edinburgh arts network. The world economic crisis in the 1970s sharpened perceptions of a parallel fiscal crisis in the state, and initiated movement away from the Keynesian settlement towards the market-oriented politics of the New Right. Under the aegis of prolonged Thatcher and Reagan governments, the 1980s saw an unprecedented change in the relationship between culture and commerce (Wu, 1989). In Britain, as in the United States, the 'rolling back' of the state was accompanied by a 'rolling in' of market regulation to the management of public life, rationalised by a rhetoric of free-market dynamism rather than the restrictions of a welfare state. Public institutions were subjected to rigorous 'value for money' audits and accountability procedures. The Arts Councils became increasingly sensitive to "greater efficiency in public spending" (Harris, 1994, p. 178), as did local government. Whilst compelling internal restructuring, Conservative government political imperatives also obliged Arts Councils to establish the structures through which to encourage funded clients to attract investment and avoid dependency on the state (Witts, 1998). The Conservative agenda for the arts in the 1980s to mid 1990s strongly emphasised enterprise by privatising cultural services and promoting the "judicious withdrawal of the state from involvement in non-

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<sup>1</sup> Chris Smith MP Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport



essential areas of public life” (Harris, 1994, p. 178).

The legacy of this new rhetorical and managerial ethos is examined in chapters four to six. In particular, the rhetoric of accountability, accessibility, managerial efficiency, and strategic development retained high political currency and resounded through the Edinburgh arts network. The appropriation of these principles by the New Labour government radically altered the funding, management, and practice of art, and greatly consolidated the power of government within the arts network. This is clear in looking at the specific conditions pertinent to the Edinburgh arts network, in outlining the structures underpinning government and local authority support and in considering how these intersect with the wider context within which visual art is produced.

On 12 May 1999 a Scottish parliament was convened in Edinburgh for the first time since 1707. Although “parliamentary sovereignty continued to nominally reside in Westminster” (Aitken, 1999, p. 9), the devolved powers of the Scottish parliament now included health, education, local government, economic development, the arts, culture and sport, civil and criminal law, agriculture, tourism, transportation, and income tax. The Scottish Office, a full government department which had supported the Secretary of State since 1926, was restructured as the Scottish Executive, the civil service of the new parliament. The Scottish Labour Party formed a coalition government with the Scottish Liberal Democrats, setting in place the consensual, inclusive and accessible principles to which the parliament aspired. Donald Dewar’s first cabinet comprised 11 Ministers, of which the Minister for Children and Education, and Enterprise and Lifelong Learning presided over arts and culture within the Education Department. Rhona Brankin, commonly referred to as ‘the Scottish arts minister’, was appointed as Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport under Sam Galbraith who was the Minister for Education. Unbound by tradition and ceremony, the parliament established a modern framework for government built around powerful subject and statutory committees. The eight subject committees included the Education, Culture and Sport Committee which had responsibility for conducting enquiries, canvassing the public, encouraging multi-disciplinary policy approaches, and setting the legislative agenda for matters relating to culture and the arts. Prior to

the establishment of the Scottish parliament, policy and funding for the arts in the UK was primarily mediated through the Arts Council of England [hereafter ACE], the Scottish Arts Council [hereafter SAC], and the Arts Council of Wales, which were also responsible for allocating National Lottery funding for the Arts within their particular areas.

In Westminster, the Department of National Heritage, established under the Conservative government in 1991, evolved into the DCMS in 1997 under the Labour government. Chris Smith became Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and held this office for the duration of Prime Minister Tony Blair's first government. He was replaced, reluctantly, by Tessa Jowell in 2001. The DCMS had responsibility for government policy on the arts, sport and recreation, the National Lottery, libraries, museums and galleries, export licensing of cultural goods, broadcasting film, press freedom and regulation, the built heritage, the royal estate and tourism. The DCMS exercised considerable influence over internal policy and strategic orientation within the Arts Councils, despite continued commitment to the 'arms-length principle' (see below). As a devolved power, however, culture and the arts became the singular responsibility of the new Scottish parliament, and the ties between Westminster and the arts in Scotland were formally dissolved. Notwithstanding this, prior to the publication in August 2000 of *Creating Our Future Minding Our Past: Scotland's National Cultural Strategy* (Scottish Executive, 2000), arts policy in Scotland remained strongly linked to Westminster and the ACE. Remarkable similarities in strategic priorities also remained in place subsequent to its publication. For instance, in addition to emphasising social inclusion, cultural tourism, the creative industries, new media, education, access, innovation and excellence, all key DCMS, SAC and ACE themes, the national cultural strategy further reflected education as a principal priority upheld across these institutions:

We will seek to build on the best of what we are already achieving. Widening opportunities, promoting education, developing and celebrating excellence, and focussing public support effectively are the key themes (Brankin, Scottish Executive, 2000, p. 1).

We have built on the foundations laid in the comprehensive spending review

(CSR) to enhance the cultural, sporting and creative life of the nation and to confirm the DCMS's expanding role in the delivery of wider social, economic and educational objectives (Smith, DCMS, AR, 2000a, p. 4).

These similarities are largely explained by the close affiliation between the Scottish Labour Party and New Labour in Westminster, as well as by the existence of MSPs in the UK parliament, a fact which facilitated a degree of policy-making consistency. The retention of areas of government outwith the devolved powers, and procedures such as the Barnett formula (the formula favourably adjusts the Scottish 'block' of funding from Westminster) further consolidated Scotland's linkages with, and dependence on UK politics, and its place within the union. Despite devolution, therefore, considerable continuity of vision and purpose continued to exist between Westminster and the Scottish Parliament.

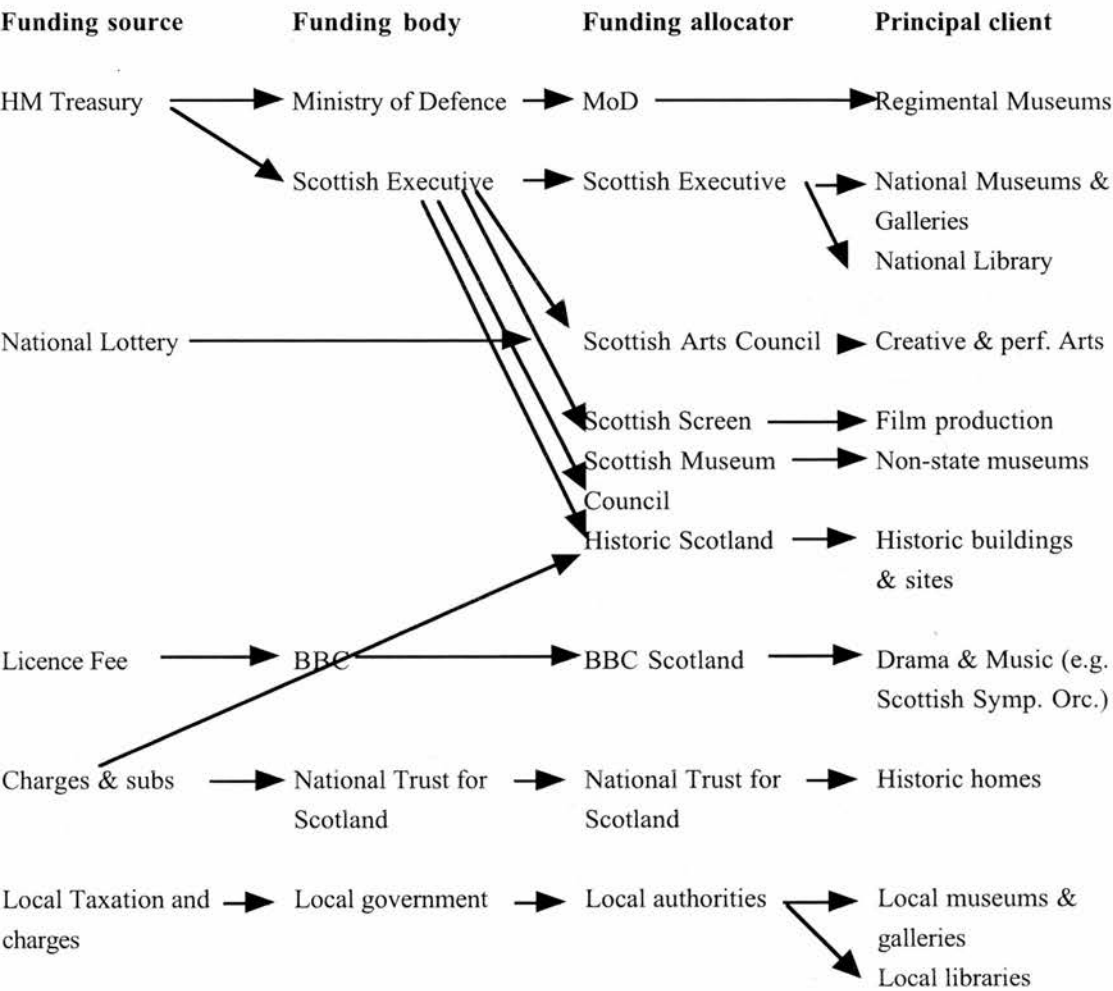
Post-devolution funding for culture and the arts in Scotland was allocated according to Figure 2. As stated in chapter two, local government is a significant supporter of the arts in Scotland. The *Charter for the Arts in Scotland* claimed that local authorities were "the structural pivot of cultural life in Scotland" (SAC, GD, 1996a, p. 19).<sup>2</sup> Scotland has 32 unitary authorities created by the Local Government (Scotland) Act in 1994.<sup>3</sup> Individual "Local authorities have placed upon them by Government a duty to provide an adequate range of arts facilities" (SAC, GD, 1996a, p. 18). In addition to commonality forged through party political allegiance, all local councils were also subject to national requirements, such as *Best Value* (see chapter six), which they had a legal obligation to fulfil. In 1999, after successive administrations, Scottish Labour were still the majority party on CEC.

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<sup>2</sup> Abbreviations are used throughout to denote subject specific areas from which documents are drawn, for example, 'GD' refers to General document (see List of abbreviations and acronyms).

<sup>3</sup> Prior to reorganisation in April 1996, local government consisted of a two tier system involving district and regional councils.

**Figure 2      Post-devolution arts funding in Scotland**



(Peacock, 2001, p. 28)

The Arts Development Section of the Recreation Department at the CEC employed in 1999 two arts development officers, a senior arts officer and an arts development manager. The Section allocated and monitored the majority of CEC's funding for heritage and the arts in Edinburgh, amounting to £2.245 million in 1998/99 (CEC, OP, 1999a, p. 6). In addition to a Small Projects Grant of £15,000, the remaining budget was available on a revenue basis for core funded organisations. As well as grants management the section was also responsible for developing the city's cultural policies and providing advice on arts development issues. The Education Department of CEC had an Arts Unit of two persons and performed similar functions to the Arts Development Section but on a smaller scale. This structural divide between recreation and education-related arts assistance was criticised by joint funded organisations for imposing an artificial separation between related activities. The situation was exacerbated by personal antipathy between the two sections which echoed ongoing disputes between District and Regional council conventions (see chapters five and six for a detailed elaboration of arts funding and management practices within the Recreation Department).

Foucault maintains that the state does not embody and express a coherent class character, and that it is not a clear agent for national government as the two realms of government do not operate coterminously (in Bennett, 1998). Indeed, there was some slippage between national political intention and local government action in Edinburgh (see chapter six). Contrary to Foucault's assertion, however, there was also close alignment between the values and priorities of CEC and those of the national political parties. For instance, in *Towards a New Enlightenment: A Cultural Policy for the City of Edinburgh* (CEC, AP, 1999b) the Council's stated objectives accorded with those of the UK government and therefore the Scottish Parliament:

to combat social exclusion ... encourage the highest standards of creativity and excellence ... foster partnership working ... develop lively and sustainable cultural industries ... promote the importance of culture for children and young people ... acknowledge ... the lifelong learning process ... interpret Edinburgh heritage ... extend personal and community development (CEC, AP, 1999b, p. 3).

As a result of their symbiotic relationships, Westminster government, Scottish National politics and local government are all significant actors within the Edinburgh arts network. This extended political infrastructure provides both strategic order and financial backing for publicly funded art across Scotland. The circular link between dominant cultural/political interests, divergent aesthetic preferences and patterns of arts funding is explored below. As a result of the public funding mechanism, political culture does affect artistic culture (see chapter six).

### **The Scottish Arts Council**

On January 1st 1940, the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts [hereafter CEMA] opened in London, a precursor to the Arts Councils in existence today. The Arts Council of Great Britain [hereafter ACGB] replaced the CEMA in 1945. As a quango, the ACGB was in receipt of public funding, although its operational autonomy was guaranteed through a royal charter which was granted in 1946. The 'arms-length principle' enabled the Arts Council to act as an intermediary between the state and civil society, balanced between the pitfalls of direct government control and the insidious pressures of commercial sponsorship (McGuigan 1996, p. 58 quoting Williams). Although retaining the original commitment to developing the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts, and increasing accessibility, the charter was amended in 1967 to reveal a shift from the 'fine arts' to the 'arts'. This change reflected government commitment to the more expansive view of culture as a way of life discussed in chapter one. Despite this broadening of the concept of culture, it has been argued that an underlying commitment to a particularly high and narrow cultural ideal has persisted within the Arts Councils.

It is arguable, that until very recently, the organisation of visual arts provision within the council adhered to an essentially idealist and elitist notion of state patronage, rooted in an amalgamation of nineteenth-century aristocratic and high bourgeois values. This position, set out in the royal charters, may be characterised as an assumed (and not specifically argued) belief in a singular 'high culture' (Harris, 1994, p. 182).



After local government the SAC is the main single body responsible for distributing public funds for the arts in Scotland.<sup>4</sup> Prior to its constitution under Royal Charter on 1st April 1994, the SAC functioned as a subcommittee of the ACGB (subsequently the ACE). The SAC aims “to create a climate in which arts of quality flourish and are enjoyed by a wide range of people throughout Scotland” (SAC, OP, 1997, p. 1).

The Council consists of 15 members appointed by the First Minister (before 1999 by the Secretary of State for Scotland), who are responsible for setting the organisation’s policies and priorities in accordance with the interests of the Scottish public and the arts organisations which serve that public. The SAC performs three main functions: providing funding, supporting development, and offering information and advice. It distributes funding to the arts through voted funds awarded by the Scottish Executive to support arts activities in line with established SAC values and priorities. Major arts organisations are funded on a continuing revenue basis, and project funds are also available on an art form basis, distributed by six art form departments, of which the Visual Arts Department is one. Each art form department has a committee of specialists drawn from relevant disciplines. In addition, following the National Lottery Act 1993, the SAC became the distributing agency for National Lottery funding for the arts in Scotland (from November 1994). The SAC is responsible to the DCMS and Scottish Executive with respect to administering the National Lottery. In a joint publication with The British Council, the SAC explained that “Although the SAC operates under Lottery Directions issued by the Secretary of State, decisions on applications for funding are taken by the Scottish Arts Council entirely independently of Government” (SAC, GD, 1996a, p. 18). National Lottery awards have to conform to the general principle of promoting the ‘public good’ on which the lottery was founded, and the SAC has to balance the differing priorities set forth in its voted and National Lottery funds. Although the principles underpinning the two funding streams were intended to remain discrete -- with voted funds established in accordance with the ‘arms-length principle’ designed to protect the

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<sup>4</sup> For the year 1998/99 the SAC received a grant of £27,443m (including an additional £2.4 million funding for the national companies), and it received £22,539 and £28,654m for its National Lottery account in 1998 and 1999 respectively (SAC, AR, 1999a, pp. 35/36). Despite common perceptions, the SAC’s grant aid steadily increased above the rate of inflation, rising to £34,339m in 1999/2000 (Peacock, 2000, p. 40). In contrast income from the National Lottery decreased from 1999, and “In the financial year 2000/01... it is estimated that £19.8 million will flow from the National Lottery” (SAC, GD, 2000c, p.1.1).

Arts Councils from political interference -- I shall show in chapter five that public funding for the arts has become increasingly politicised.

The National Lottery had enormous impact on the SAC, more than doubling their overall budget. This significantly altered the SAC's relationship with local authorities. The lead-up to the parliament, for example, was used by SNP politicians, COSLA, and local authorities who coveted the SAC's National Lottery remit, as an opportunity for 'a bonfire of the quangos'.<sup>5</sup> Protesting about excessive bureaucracy and elitism, the afore-mentioned parties had designs to diminish the SAC's power base by taking over distribution of the Lottery. Management of the Lottery had, however, greatly enhanced the SAC's capacity to prove its representativeness and close adherence to current political prerogatives, and although threatened with review, it has to date survived intact. Until early 1997 the Lottery primarily funded buildings and equipment, and latterly provided project assistance based around core themes and political/developmental priorities. Through the Lottery cultural authority was further consolidated and strategically invested in existing buildings and institutions. In 1996-97, 98 awards for under under £20,000 cost the Lottery £917,443, as opposed to 9 awards of over £1 million which cost £19,728,386 (SAC, AR, 1997a, p. 20). Although this trend decreased over the years, the greater balance of money has consistently been awarded to fewer organisations, indicating a more immediate commitment to established institutions and to large-scale proposals rather than more modest organisations and smaller amounts of money. Further, the Lottery was found unevenly to favour articulate and successful urban projects, thus compounding social inequalities within and between particular geographical locations (Ahmed, 2000; Murray-Watson, 2000).

A widely-shared commitment to designating particular centres of excellence, along with the introduction of funding agreements between arts' clients and funding agents within the SAC and the CEC, further embedded the gallery infrastructure of the city, marking out the sanctified from the vulnerable through a system of one, two and three year awards. Consequently, despite the rhetoric of enlightenment and change within CEC and SAC, caution was built into the funding system as organisations fought to

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<sup>5</sup> This term was used extensively by the Scottish National Party during the 1999 Scottish election campaign. The party vowed to cut what it saw as unnecessary bureaucracy.

secure long-term funding relationships, and maintain and expand the buildings from which they operated. Cultural, economic, material, and professional capital coincided, creating a sustainable and conservative system of authority in which the relative power of different aesthetic positions was unevenly dispersed and rewarded. The fate of emergent artists and projects was inescapably tied into the fluctuating fortunes of funded organisations, as it was easier to reject a new application than cut an existing client.<sup>6</sup> In addition, any financial deficit accumulated, by for instance the Scottish Opera -- which between 1997 and 2001 was in a recurring state of financial ruin -- negatively impinged on growth budgets. Cultural authority was not, therefore, easily handed down from one generation to another, across social classes, or from one art form, institution, or collection of aesthetic allegiances to another. Rather, approval was strategically channelled into and jealously protected by a consolidated network of institutions, professionals, and artistic conventions. The public funding structure provided a network of associations, and resources, which mediated relationships between the different actors, and provided one of the primary structures of legitimisation -- the status and resources which accompanied public subsidy -- for them to draw on. In stringent financial times organisations were thrown into an enhanced, competitive, and antagonistic state of interdependency, with the fate of each hanging in precarious harmony with those around it.

Both the SAC and CEC are intersected by multiple lines of accountability. They struggle to accommodate the interests of the DCMS, Scottish Executive, each other, the public, artists, and various conflicting arts constituencies alongside their own 'internal' imperatives. In part constituted by the interests and priorities of 'external' actors which influence award criteria, they refined and extended the terms of their own operations into distant/other spaces through the subsequent distribution of these awards. The rhetoric of each agency reached into the institutional spaces of funded organisations, and was in turn touched by those they accommodated. Institutional discourses and relations were, therefore, permeable and mutually constitutive. As such, the edgy dialogues between different and compelling discourses and institutions were projected, absorbed and interchanged through an extended series of practical

<sup>6</sup> The term 'emergent artists' was used by contemporary conceptual artists to denote young artists of the same aesthetic ilk as themselves. Most of the artists I worked with either conceived of themselves, or were referred to by others, as being conceptual, contemporary, or emergent, and consequently I use these terms to refer to them as opposed to other living artists of a more 'conventional' nature.

actions. The art world operated as an interconnected entity, the boundaries of which were widely dispersed. As I shall show, however, this collectivity was based upon a mixture of competitive disinterest and dependency. Having provided an overview of the arts funding infrastructure, I now address the cultural context within which these mechanisms were instituted in Edinburgh. The final section focuses on artistic discourses and the gallery infrastructure, before drawing these various elements together through grounded example.

### **‘Contemporary Focus’: Edinburgh’s artists and galleries**

In this section I examine how thoughts about art (individual and institutional discourses) drive and give shape to the art network itself. Discourses produce particular distinctions. I argue that the network consists of the relations between contributing actors and that discourses and practices are an intrinsic part of these interactions. By looking at the interactions between funding agencies and galleries and contrary aesthetic discourses, I show how processes of distinction are productive of the network. The interaction between traditional, modernist and conceptual aesthetic interests is pivotal to the development of public art in Edinburgh. As conceptual artist Rose Frain noted:

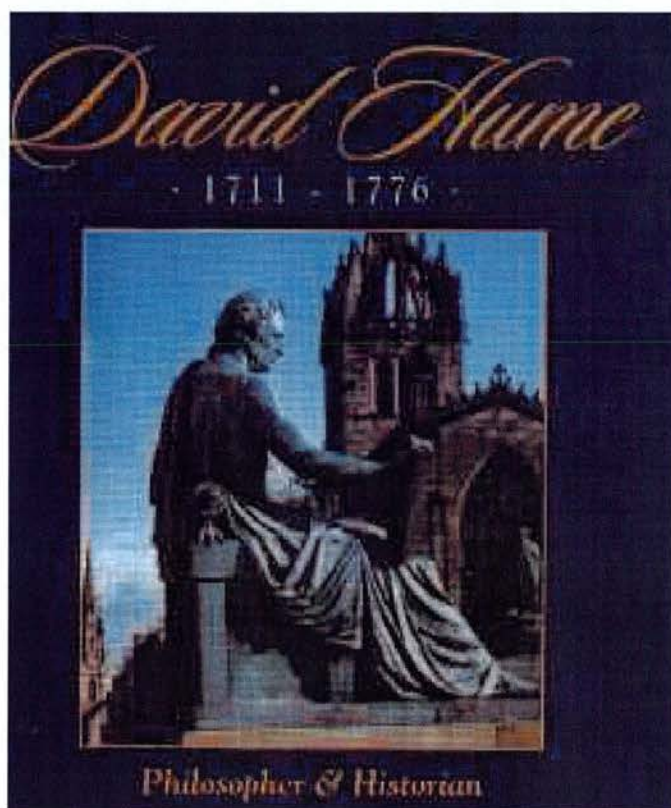
Though a stunning city visually, Edinburgh’s innate conservatism has long promoted a climate inhospitable to contemporary visual art practice. In the Edinburgh collective consciousness, visual art isn’t rated ... This insensibility is institutionalised by the marginalisation of the visual arts in the official Edinburgh Festival brochure to a derisory and partial roster ... (Frain, 1998, p. 16).

Throughout the 1990s arts provision in Edinburgh predominantly centred on national prestige and Edinburgh’s status as a capital city. Cultural authority was most conspicuously channelled through the Edinburgh International Festival [hereafter EIF]. In 2001-2, for instance, the Recreation Department of CEC awarded £959,600 to EIF, and £34,100 to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society Ltd which is the world’s largest festival of emergent and populist professional and amateur theatre (CEC, AP, 2001a). I was told that a senior Recreation Department manager wanted



to cut 20 percent from one gallery's grant because, she/he "doesn't like it because it's modern and new, stupid bastard" (arts officer, Appendix 1, 61, C). In such a manner, the interplay between competing aesthetic discourses gave rise to particular funding configurations which in turn reinforced the city's dominant cultural dynamic. Aesthetic preferences and funding structures were thus mutually determining, working together to create a conservative context for art.

Although awareness of its past was seen as positive in relation to building preservation for instance, Edinburgh's historic legacy was also regarded as stifling innovation rather than enabling progressive cultural expression (Appendix, 53, T). The erection of a seated statue of David Hume (Stoddart, 1997) on the Royal Mile by the Saltire Society in 1997 was cited by a number of contemporary artists as an example of the city's rarefied relationship with art. Edinburgh, one curator remarked, "suffers from having a historic past" (Appendix, 24, IN). History, as Buchloch (1997) noted, is used in legitimisation processes as a comparative index to validate



the present: progress as a return rather than movement forward. Contemporary cultural and economic ideals were therefore strongly informed by the historic fabric of the city, and as such, the past provided a compelling framework through which to judge, enable and restrict contemporary activities. Modernism, one Edinburgh College of Art [hereafter ECA] lecturer told me, had been rejected by the city. "Duchamp has no value" (Appendix, 24,

Figure 3: *David Hume* - Stoddart (1997)

TN).<sup>7</sup> In art historical terms, this created an obvious dilemma for conceptual artists trying to operate in a city more adapted to representation and figuration than to the play of ideas. It is worth noting that the opinions of those I researched can be read as information about particular situations, but also as a form of self-positioning. Although this posturing is important, I also needed to balance individual statements alongside other empirical material in order to place them in context and maintain my own critical awareness.

Utilising a networked approach enabled me to draw in and analyse the roles of a variety of actors. Art critics and the public, for instance, emerged as significant, and apparently negative, actors within the network. Both were rebuked by contemporary artists for not spending the time needed to appreciate conceptual work. I was told that they readily dismissed conceptual art without having the language through which to understand it (curator, Appendix 1, 119, GT). A regressive and partisan media was seen to starve the public of the positive coverage needed to encourage a greater appreciation of this work:

We are all heartily bored of seeing serious young men in spectacles and funny ties lecture us on Duchamp, Dada and how important it is to break free from Victorian conventions. How the complacent middle-class moral mind set must be forever subverted so that our bourgeois weltanschauung is continually refreshed by the shock of the new, etc., etc., etc. ... When shock per se becomes the norm it is surely time to revert to something new. Like talent and effort. ... But let these butterflies appropriate the word "art". Let it go the way of "gay", "chairman" and all the other words and phrases which have been colonised and occupied by the forces of perpetual discontent" (McAuliffe, 2000).

Aided by an unsympathetic press, emergent artists seem to have constructed narratives of their own marginalisation in relation to an arts establishment which they felt systematically validated essentially conservative aesthetic preferences.

Much frustration also surrounded the council's apparent lack of support for

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<sup>7</sup> In 1917 Marcel Duchamp famously exhibited a urinal entitled *Fountain* as a work of art rather than a functioning object. By so doing he radically undermined the boundary between art and non-art and elevated the role of artistic intentionality as opposed to learned skills or the material significance of the object as a conventional 'work of art'. Duchamp thus laid the foundations for conceptual art.



contemporary work in contrast to Glasgow City Council [hereafter GCC]. It was said that “Until [the] council start seriously supporting visual art it won’t happen as artists need spaces and [they] can’t get access to galleries. [The] Collective [gallery] only does ten shows a year. Glasgow is bursting with activity” (gallery manager, Appendix, 129, M). Unfavourable comparisons between Edinburgh as a middle class, Anglicised and precious city, and Glasgow as working class, Scottish and brash, had its parallel within the respective art worlds. While Glaswegian artists basked in experimental notoriety, artists in Edinburgh struggled to shake their dour reputation. GCC pursued a cultural agenda focused on urban renewal and regeneration (Booth and Boyle, 1993; Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993). The role and function of art was promoted along more inclusive notions of a dynamic ‘people’s culture’. Despite health problems unprecedented in the developing world, and shocking levels of poverty and unemployment (Bailey, Turok and Docherty, 1999), Glasgow maintained a stronger reputation for cultural vitality, in part promoted through initiatives like the *City of Culture* and *City of Architecture and Design 1999*. Asked about Edinburgh’s relationship with Glasgow one artist remarked that:

Glasgow [has] been built on innovation and industry, on keeping up with things, [this] is how it came about. Edinburgh [is] more conservative and traditional. [It] is amazing [we] made Dolly the sheep up the road but [we] don’t want to accept Duchamp’s place in art history. [It] is annoying to have the contrast all the time, but they are culturally different. Edinburgh’s richer, but Glasgow has to keep up with the times, [it] is practical, modern and forward thinking and [this] is also a way of getting money, it gets money by being accessible (Appendix, 139, PF).

The rivalry between the two cities has to some extent been contrived by the media keen to manufacture a compelling story of conflict, growth and decline -- reporting on the opening of *Scotland’s Art* at the CAC (1999), the Edinburgh-based *Scotland on Sunday* wrote that “Edinburgh is set to succeed where Glasgow failed - by showcasing the cream of Scottish art” (Dalton, 1999). On the whole artists themselves took care to disassociate themselves from such public disputes, but Glasgow remained a source of inspiration as well as a comparative index.

In addition to the competitive, but energising exchange between Edinburgh and

Glasgow, the spectre of the prevailing London art world also featured prominently within the network (for similar parallels between the St. Louis and New York art worlds see Plattner, 1996). Despite the growing confidence of Scottish art therefore, Edinburgh's galleries and artists continued to seek accommodation within an extended system of approval which revolved around Glasgow and London. Reference was frequently made to the marginalisation of Edinburgh-based art and the London-centric nature of the art market, critics and press, for instance. Yet, it was also acknowledged that "you need to have an energy outside Edinburgh as well to make this happen" (artist, Appendix, 131, GT). As one gallery manager remarked, the "art world's getting smaller" (Appendix, 15, M). The arts network and associated practices were therefore located within an evolving geographical context, one sustained by the flows of creative ideas and practices between Edinburgh, Glasgow and London, and other parts of Britain. The contextualised location of the Edinburgh art world therefore mobilised connections to other contexts nationally and internationally. The network exists within a wider orbit of taste and an operational climate which makes judgements and channels approval through extended series of negotiations and interactions stretching across geographical scales, aesthetic alliances, and socio-professional groups. Recognising such contexts highlights how the network does not conform to strict boundaries of reference or activity.

Given this broad context, there was a growing consensus that more needed to be done in Edinburgh to promote the profile of contemporary art. The SAC led the way in recognising the economic import of contemporary art, and in its *Corporate Plan 1997 - 2001* the organisation pledged to "support initiatives to develop a market in Scotland for innovative contemporary art" (SAC, OP, 1997b, p. 11). The burgeoning international reputation of Edinburgh-based artists like Calum Colvin, Callum Innes and Alan Johnston further added to the sense that "things are starting to change here [from being] so inward, and [are] starting to look out" (curator, Appendix, 13, M). The Scottish parliament was seen by many artists as an opportunity to further promote a climate in which "the entrenched establishment was made a little more nervous" (Esche cited in Frain, 1998, p. 17). The Scottish Tourist Board (subsequently VisitScotland) also recognised the potential to re-brand Edinburgh as a dynamic modern metropolis (Appendix, 155, DF). Possible synergies between

culture and history present market opportunities for tourism and the cultural sector, an economic consideration which did not escape CEC officials. Indeed, the CEC (1999b) published its cultural strategy as *Towards the New Enlightenment: A Cultural Policy for the City of Edinburgh*.<sup>8</sup>

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Edinburgh was the focus of an extraordinary upsurge of intellectual, scientific and cultural energy, which transformed European thought and life. The city's contribution to the Enlightenment has guaranteed it a place in history, but what of the future? ... With the forthcoming establishment of the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh is once again assuming its historic role as the political powerhouse of the nation. Could this development be the catalyst for another explosion of cultural activity, a new Enlightenment? (CEC, AP, 1999b, p. 1).

This vision of an enlightened Edinburgh rising out of the wilderness years of the twentieth century to take its historic place as an international powerhouse of cultural, intellectual and political energy, captured the tenor of political rhetoric in the build-up to the new Scottish parliament in 1999. As such, the notion of an enlightenment morality which Habermas regarded as counterposing "a functioning society of social labour and a depoliticised public sphere", was commodified in the name of economic prosperity and cultural convention (Habermas, 1989, p. 61). A timely combination of political, economic, geographical and cultural factors resulted in prising open the available space for contemporary practice in Edinburgh.

This framework of expectations and opportunities, along with additional pressure from emerging Edinburgh-based artists (Chad McCail, Paul Carter, Janice McNabb, Clara Ursitti, Anne Bevan, Moyna Flannigan and Wendy McMurdo among others), galvanised the Collective Gallery, CAC, Talbot Rice Gallery, and the Fruitmarket Gallery to co-host a series of exhibitions collectively entitled *Contemporary Focus*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Even high brow cultural champions such as Alan Massie were critical about the notion of a cultural revival, however, stating that "There has been much talk of a cultural renaissance in Scotland ... Yet it is doubtful if even a handful of artists could make a living from their work if they had to depend on the Scottish public ... painters are put under contract by London galleries ... Art in Scotland cannot, it seems support itself. Despite this, we boast of our cultural renaissance. Who do we think we are kidding?" (Massie, 2000, p. 61/62/65).

<sup>9</sup> In 1998 - 99, Callum Innes won the NatWest Prize (£30,000), Turner Prize winner Douglas Gordon won the Hugo Boss Prize, the largest award in America (\$50,000), and Ross Sinclair & Richard Wright were one of five artists to win the Paul Hamlyn Award (£15,000). Martin Creed won the Turner Prize (£20,000) in 2001.

Running from April to July 1999, *Contemporary Focus* consisted of five exhibitions, one in each gallery -- *Citizen 2000* and *You Are Very Important* (Collective Gallery), *Locale* (CAC), *In The Summertime* (Talbot Rice Gallery), and *Evolution Isn't Over Yet* (Fruitmarket Gallery). Consistent with SAC and CEC audience development and access priorities, the exhibitions were supported by gallery talks, public forums and art tours -- funded by a one-off SAC grant. The exhibitions themselves were largely financed from the galleries' core funding budgets. I became involved in the initial planning, hanging, and opening of the exhibitions through my research at the CAC. I also made a contribution to *Locale* in the form of an information pack for visual artists and attended events surrounding the exhibitions.

For Brown and McCrone (1998), Scots voted for devolution for pragmatic and civic reasons rather than reasons of sovereignty, nationalism or identity.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, rather than representing an outlet for nationalistic sentiment, the new parliament was utilised strategically to negotiate professional space for the arts by catching the dynamic between one form of political administration and another.<sup>11</sup> One of the *Contemporary Focus* curators explained that:

Historically Scotland [has] not had a remarkable history of development in the visual arts. [In] Milan artists are treated with reverence and homage, [here] artists are treated with ... [not recorded]. [The] Prada Foundation plows money into the foundation. [There] isn't that kind of love of art in Scotland. Maybe it's a reflection of the fact Scotland isn't an independent country, a fear that we don't have the confidence to say this is our culture and we're proud of it. Something of the Scottish character formed by being part of Britain (Appendix, 130, M).

Another curator remarked that the exhibitions were promoted as a timely means

<sup>10</sup> 'A New Parliament and Scotland's Future', Alice Brown and David McCrone, Lothian European Lectures 1998 - 1999, Edinburgh, 9 November 1998.

<sup>11</sup> This enterprising approach to the parliament was not restricted to artists and gallery managers, and the SNP, COSLA, and individual CEC staff used the opportunity to attack the SAC's power base, calling for its abolition in favour of increased local authority involvement (Appendix, 12, S). As one arts officer said to me, "Sam Galbraith [has] indicated [there] is no way [he] will change the status quo, [but] people have the sniff of blood now" (Appendix, 35, CM). The parliament therefore represented an opportunity but also a threat, as old animosities were drawn to the surface. The Scottish Arts Voluntary Organisation [hereafter SALVO], for instance, stated that "We have accepted their authority to shape culture, to set criteria, to validate this and penalise that. The organs of state funding for the arts in Britain are hanging on, enjoying the boost of Camelot's takings. Their days are numbered though, and they know it" (SALVO, 1999, p. 3).



through which to “focus on Edinburgh because of May sixth, [and the] optimistic feeling and chance to reassess what’s happening in visual and contemporary art ... positioning a very contemporary Scottish culture to the Scottish parliament” (Appendix, 128, M). Emphasising the buoyancy of the contemporary scene in Scotland, a further curator remarked that she had been “bowled over by the strength of the artists as aesthetically and conceptually exciting” (Appendix, 130, M). The exhibitions provided a rare opportunity for contemporary galleries in the city to promote emergent artists, assert their own presence, and cultivate the profile of visual art in relation to potential audiences and the new parliament. The artists involved in *Contemporary Focus* were caught up in this wider cultural conversation, and their work contributed to the web of allegiances and exclusions resulting from the continual affirmation and breaking apart of the dominant aesthetic codes in the city. Bourdieu (1996a) maintains that differentiation creates exclusion. My findings indicate that it also creates inclusion, as groups of actors struggled to secure presence and space within the network, in conceptual, material and discursive terms. As such, discourses operated spatially as well as conceptually and materially and at different scales. The exhibitions were intended to place Scottish art generally, and emergent art from Edinburgh specifically, on the political and cultural map in both a national and international sense, for example.

*Locale* was really important to connect Edinburgh to the international scene, [as it included] artists who are active internationally and artists who have an international reputation and are working in the city, partly acknowledging their status and how they promote contemporary work (curator, Appendix, 128, M).

Although catalysed by unfolding cultural and political undercurrents, there was also a fortuitous aspect to the exhibitions -- the space for the Fruitmarket Gallery show only became available after a cancellation. Unpredictable forces therefore played their part alongside more sustained factors.

Set against the relative power of the ‘arts establishment’ and the grandeur of the national galleries were the artist-run collectives including the Collective Gallery, Out of the Blue, Virus and Proto Academy, and other publicly-funded independent

galleries like Stills, Portfolio, and the Fruitmarket Gallery. A number of the *Contemporary Focus* artists had previously held exhibitions at the Collective Gallery, and I became aware of how artist-run collectives provided a valuable intermediary role within the gallery circuit, enabling artists to progress through the exhibition hierarchy in the city. Although each institution occupied its own space within the overall framework, individual functions and responsibilities were asserted formally through funding agreements with CEC and SAC, Edinburgh's gallery infrastructure had originally evolved haphazardly.



Figure 4 (clockwise from top): City Art Centre, Fruitmarket Gallery, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

According to an arts officer, the high concentration of photography galleries was due to a split between two managers who subsequently formed rival galleries “in direct



opposition to each other” (Appendix, 12, S). The network was held together and altered through individual as well as institutional relationships. The galleries involved in *Contemporary Focus* formed part of the complementary mix of visual arts provision in the city. The Collective Gallery is “an artist-based organisation committed primarily to the support and development of emergent artists and new art” (Collective Gallery, 1999). The gallery listed its aims as to “emphasise diversity and experimentation”, and “contribute significantly to a vibrant and critical local art environment” (Collective Gallery, 1999). *Contemporary Focus* clearly complemented the aims and values of the gallery, and its director was strongly committed from the outset. Operating as a contemporary art space since 1974, the Fruitmarket Gallery had been relaunched in 1993 with an award winning redesign by the acclaimed Edinburgh-based Richard Murphy Architects. The gallery:

is an acclaimed international art space. Centrally located between the Old and New Town, the Fruitmarket Gallery offers a counterpoint to the many traditional and historic attractions in the city. the Fruitmarket Gallery shows a programme of thought-provoking exhibitions of Scottish, British and International contemporary art (Fruitmarket Gallery, 1999).

Conspicuously modern in its architecture and curatorial line, the Fruitmarket attempted to position itself at the heart of progressive aesthetic interests within the city. Its self-perception as “contemporary, stunning, stimulating, beautiful, challenging, mesmeric, intense, vibrant, exciting, inspiring, mind-blowing, dynamic, enlightening, thought-provoking” (Fruitmarket Gallery, 1999) differed markedly from the opinion of emergent artists. For John Beagles, who exhibited in *Evolution Isn't Over Yet*:

Steadfastly following a path dictated by his personal predilections, he [the director] has demonstrated a disinterest in most ‘contemporary’ art (especially Scottish). Instead he has opted for staging ‘discovery’ shows of new Asian art (China and Japan with India to come) with group and solo exhibitions of romanticised, elemental work ... there has been a tangible, almost exclusive orientation towards that traditional nexus, the Artist and Nature. Holed up within the confines of the gallery, lies an unreconstructed modernism where the artist remains the sole creator of his work, authentic materials imbued with meaning abound and everywhere there is the promise

of an art of quasi-religious transformation. ... the Fruitmarket has increasingly begun to behave like a bastion of self professed good taste, ardently protecting all that is proper and right about art, in the face of a perceived onslaught of young British artists' childish, puerile fantasies. ... How long the Fruitmarket can survive, behaving like an irritated ostrich with its head in the sand, is tellingly up for grabs at present (Beagles, 1997, p. 12).

Beagles gestures towards the fractious juxtaposition between modern and postmodern approaches to contemporary art in the city (see chapter four). The arts establishment in its aristocratic or traditional manifestations was commonly distinguished from the modernist arts establishment by artists and galleries which identified with conceptual art and artist-run initiatives.

The modernist debate is dead and most artists know that. [It] is about how they locate themselves, [they] don't see themselves as isolated in the garret, as producing some awe inspiring thing. [They] don't see themselves as 'I'm an artist and that's what I do', but as other things, i.e. [I] work in Safeways, [I'm] a mother, etc. (gallery manager, Appendix, 15, M).

Beagles questions whether the orthodox practices adopted by the Fruitmarket Gallery would survive the critical onslaught from the emergent art sector. Given such criticism and the responsibility the Fruitmarket had to support contemporary Scottish art, *Contemporary Focus* provided a valuable chance for the gallery to reassert its credibility as an exciting and reputable contemporary arts space. Long overdue association with the Collective Gallery gave particular authenticity to this intent.

Situated opposite the Fruitmarket is the larger CAC, owned by CEC and managed by the Arts and Heritage Division of the Recreation Department. The CAC houses the city's collection of Scottish art, and displays exhibitions ranging from "block-busters to community arts and from popular culture to avant-garde art" (Friends of the CAC and Museums, 1999). *Contemporary Focus* coincided with the reopening of the CAC. On meeting the curator, she mentioned how this presented an opportunity to counter the CAC's established reputation as conservative and to "reopen with a show about what's happening in Edinburgh" (SAC, GD, 1996a, p. 43). With Duncan

Macmillan, writer, journalist and Professor of History of Scottish Art at the University Edinburgh, at the helm, the University's Talbot Rice Gallery was also widely regarded as a conventional space "specialising in exhibiting the work of mid-career artists from Scotland and elsewhere" (SAC, GD, 1996, p. 43). The choice of artists' work from W.A.S.P.S Studios for *In The Summertime* is indicative of the gallery's orthodox curatorial policy which favours figurative and abstract work over conceptual art.

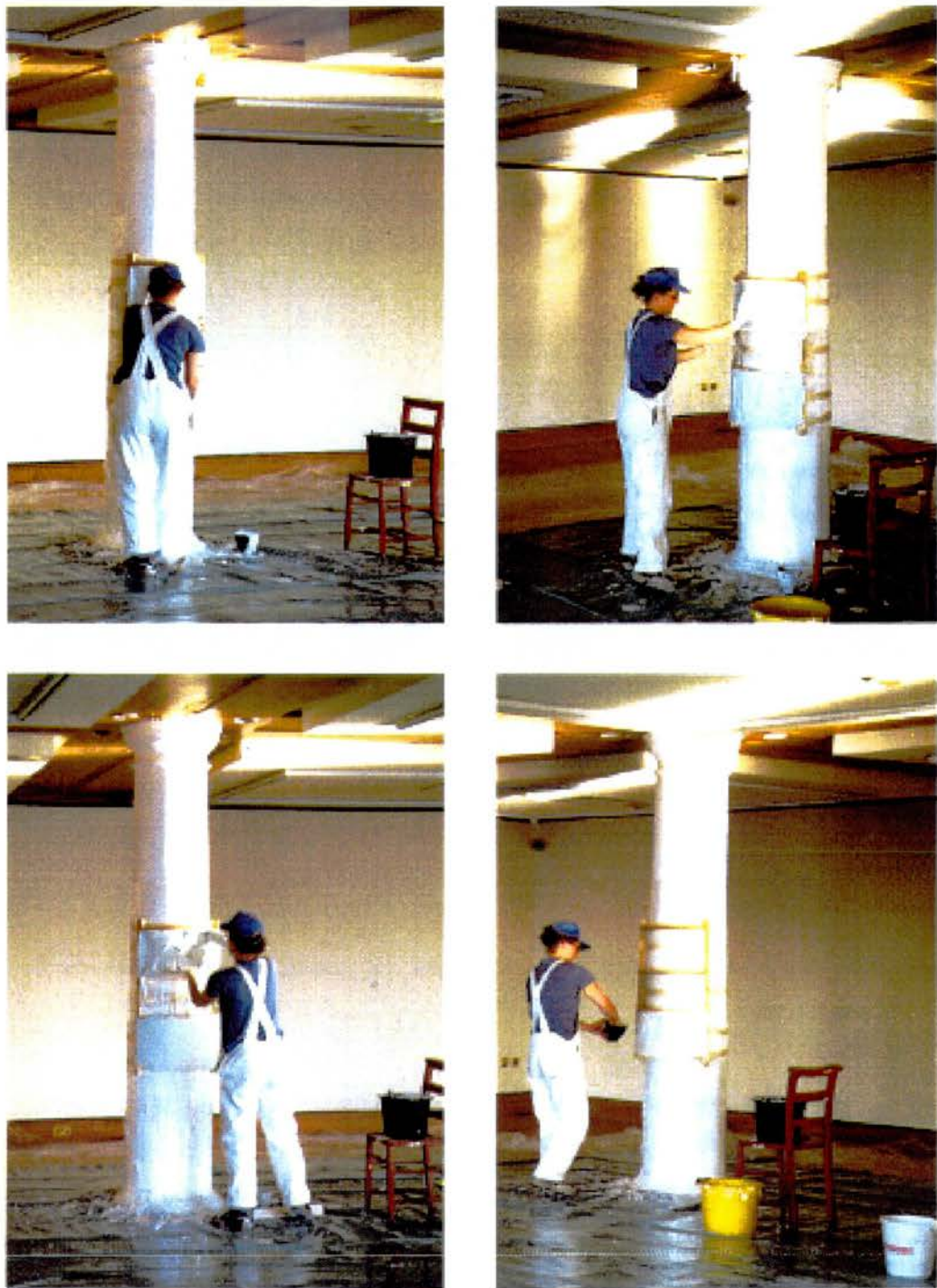
I spent the installation weeks talking with, and occasionally helping, the artists as they hung their work in the CAC, Fruitmarket and Collective galleries. As the exhibitions took shape, so too the contours of the different artistic communities began to emerge through these conversations. Reflecting on visual art in Edinburgh, one artist said that there was a tight network of people who monopolised resources and support for their own work (Appendix, 107, HE). Others echoed the conviction that visual art was controlled by powerful individuals rooted within, and representative of, an aristocratic social order which dominated the art market, controlled the national art institutions (all of which are based in Edinburgh and are directly funded by the Scottish Executive), and dictated the terms of art production within the city. When discussing the Royal Scottish Academy [hereafter RSA], NGoS, Talbot Rice Gallery, and ECA, the manager of one contemporary gallery said that the "agenda [has] been set by these traditional institutions", and that "they never had much confidence in contemporary [work]" (Appendix, 129, M). Practising artists whose aesthetic preferences lay outside this cultural circle believed themselves excluded from the network, as was evident from the complaints about the exclusivity and retrospective bias of work in the RSA annual exhibition. It was felt that this body of opinion conformed to a "fine art tradition" instituted by a "tight, middle class, New Town control".

Bricks and mortar also made tangible the cultural ambitions and professional standing of different factions within the arts network, marking and maintaining clear lines of artistic identity and institutional control. The conversion of the CAC by CEC in 1992 for example, involved transposing a mock classical veneer onto the old industrial building by plastering over the original cast iron pillars in each gallery with



Romanesque columns, and adding tropical hardwood floors and wall panelling. Sculptor Anne Bevan (1999) produced plaster casts of the CAC's fake pillars for

Figure 5: *Counter Motion* - Anne Bevan (1999)



*Locale.* By exploring layering, concealment and disguise, her work provided an apt metaphor for the play between utility and pretension which characterised Edinburgh's relationship with its industrial and popular past. Her work also self-consciously highlighted how structural arrangements mirrored, confirmed and gave substance to the cultural aspirations and aesthetic discourses which animated the Edinburgh art world. Art works and gallery buildings were thus recruited as tactics of distinction in the endless play between rival affinities.

The 'fine art' social and professional network seems to be removed from the values, aesthetic forms and everyday actions of emergent artists. The above artist argued that "there is a closed system operating, unlike in some other countries, and it's worse in Scotland" (Appendix 1, 107, HE). He criticised Timothy Clifford, the Director of the National Galleries of Scotland for being a "Tory government appointment, and an aspiring London luvvie". Clifford was seen to epitomise the conflation of nostalgic upper middle class tastes and aristocratic high art priorities with government interests -- NGoS's favourable funding settlement reflected Edinburgh's uneven aesthetic preferences. The new Dean Gallery conversion was given as an example of this collaboration, disparagingly referred to as "New Labour meets with the eighteenth-century house". The artist disliked the Victorian style hanging style of the paintings - cluttered from floor to ceiling - and also strongly objected to the "horrible retailing shop". The nostalgic populism of the conversion and the integration of retail facilities into the body of the gallery, does represent a closer, albeit reluctant, convergence of traditional high art circles with the interests and tastes of the wider consuming public. The NGoS retail manager explained that whilst the discreet cafe selling carrot cake and cappuccino had been placidly accommodated by the National Portrait Gallery, the gallery shop selling computer mouse pads crafted into the shape of *The Three Graces* (Carnova, 1757-1822) backsides, was regarded by some as vulgar and therefore polluting the artistic integrity of the institution.<sup>12</sup>

The galleries showing emergent work in Edinburgh did not demonstrate a similar pragmatism in relation to engaging with popular tastes and commercial opportunities (or as one artist referred to it, "the promotion of populist philistinism") (Appendix

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<sup>12</sup> 'The Art of Shopping', lunchtime talk, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 18 November 1998.

1, 57, CM). Attitudes towards money further complicate aesthetic relations in Edinburgh, a factor discussed in chapter four. Whilst divergent aesthetic alliances, namely conventional and conceptual tastes, operated in contradistinction to each other, in certain instances when faced by a greater threat such as the democratisation of the arts, they would also converge in solidarity. In addition to this, the coherence of each could not be taken entirely for granted as each group of actors also fractured internally. For instance, *Locale* exposed strong aesthetic disputes within the CAC itself, and the Friends of the CAC found the work particularly challenging. I was also told that in protest one senior member of staff “hadn’t come to the opening and probably wouldn’t come to see the exhibition at all” (curator, Appendix 1, 63, GO). Given this, it is necessary to acknowledge the incoherence of institutional cultures, the contingency of inter-institutional relations, and the capacity for both individuals and institutions to embody inconsistency and contradiction.

The relative status of individual galleries was continually negotiated, contested, and even undermined by artists and gallery managers themselves. One gallery manager revealed that the impetus for artist controlled spaces came from an ideological quest to destabilise the art world hegemony (Appendix 1, 112, PF). In such a way the manner in which individuals distinguished themselves made them more embroiled in the overall network. Artist-run collectives and grassroots activities associated with them were generally referred to as sources of “energy” and authenticity, as places where new artistic forms emerged, and as a means through which artistic conventions were challenged. At one of the *In The Summertime* discussions, a representative from WASPS Studios confirmed that “[There] is a lot of talk about visual arts being fragmented, but sometimes [this] can be a strength” (Appendix, 139, PF). Although valuing institutional distinctiveness, the SAC and CEC also conformed to national government priorities by encouraging partnership working between galleries. They also began to work much more closer together with respect to policy development and monitoring of joint funded clients (Appendix, 44, M). *Contemporary Focus* was praised by the SAC as a model of partnership practice, recognition which was important when it came to assessing funding status.

Despite institutional rivalries, therefore, competition between galleries was not



consistent. Through *Contemporary Focus* staff formed personal allegiances which cut across these disputes. There is a clear consensus among the visual arts community that historically visual art had always received a relatively small percentage of arts council funding (Harris, 1994, p. 181). In 2001-2002, visual art received 5 percent of SAC spending on art forms, as opposed to 13 percent for drama, and 28 percent for music (includes opera) (Peacock, 2000, p. 41).<sup>13</sup> Widespread speculation about the relative merits of different organisations and art forms, and scepticism about the ‘objectivity’ of funding decisions, fuelled resentment towards those perceived to be less disciplined, worthwhile or effective (see chapter six). As one conference delegate remarked, “Most people in this room are entrepreneurs and most who aren’t here are subsidised to the neck, Scottish Opera aren’t here. [They] are off spending their subsidies [laughter]” (Appendix, 17, M). Although the visual arts world unified in protest against the disproportionate allocation of resources, conversely the resulting financial restraints also sharpened competition between galleries: “What troubles me in seeing the terrible financial crisis so many arts organisations are embroiled in is that to a certain extent it seems to nurture a culture of division between art forms and organisations through the necessary battle for resources” (Collins in SALVO, 1999, p. 4). Qualitative distinctions made along art form and institutional lines were therefore exaggerated by disparities in funding allocation.

Positioned at the extreme end, or cutting edge of emerging art practice in the city, the Collective Gallery had a difficult relationship with some of the more conventional contemporary galleries, managers and art critics. The collaboration between the Fruitmarket and Collective galleries for *Evolution Isn’t Over Yet* came about when one indignant manager phoned the other to vent his/her frustration about what the other gallery “was and wasn’t doing” (Appendix, 75, HE). Accusations about the failure to support emergent art in the city were further directed at ECA. In Glasgow, the co-ordination between the art college, local galleries, and art students helped to create its dynamic contemporary art scene. The MFA in Environmental Art at Glasgow College of Art counted Roddy Buchanan, Christine Borland and Douglas Gordon among its many successful graduates. In contrast, “Edinburgh, meanwhile, operating socially in a series of small, closed circles protecting vested interests, stifling critical

<sup>13</sup> Visual arts received £2,037,773 in 1997/8 compared to £12, 079, 040 for the National Companies, and £4, 691, 609 for drama (SAC, OP, 1997b, p. 24).

discourse and levying punitive charges, is as one Italian collector observed, ‘a harsh environment for an artist’” (Frain, 1998, p. 16). ECA was overwhelmingly perceived to be introspective and whimsical, and to accord higher status to painting and sculpture of a conventional nature. One gallery manager said ECA had “a particular tradition [which is] steeped in drawing and painting”, and that it was “an isolated island where all are in-bred. Stuck in the 1950s” (Appendix 1, 15, M). A disillusioned art student also claimed that students were disabled by ECA’s institutionalised reluctance to accommodate change or deviation from accepted modes of thinking. He bemoaned its lack of engagement with the outside world and the wider visual arts community (Appendix, 137, C). Simply acquiring presence within the network did not assure legitimacy for the different actors. The reputation of the art college was greatly affected by its unwillingness to embed its presence within the wider operational context. In conversation with a gallery manager, the estranged art college regarded the Collective Gallery as “the devil incarnate” (Appendix 1, 15, M).

The perception that in recent years the contemporary scene had blossomed in Edinburgh despite ECA inadequacies was common currency among the galleries and artists I researched. The artists had been obliged to work even harder, often against the art college, inflating their own active presence in order to gain recognition for their work. ECA’s inability to cultivate working links with other actors in the network echoes Latour’s (1993) point that power should be conceived as numbers and length of connections rather than as an absolute property which is either absent or present. Connections on their own do not denote power, but power accumulates in the moments when these connections are actively mobilised. Equally, presence, or space within the network must be continually replenished and consolidated by cultivating working linkages and being seen to act.

By deliberately packaging itself as daring, progressive and experimental, the *Contemporary Focus* initiative cocked a snook at those institutions perceived to engage in the continuous regeneration of comfortable aesthetic norms. Much of the work was considered controversial, obliging the arts community, critics and the public, to confront an expanded definition of art which confounded many conventional expectations of form, function and content.



Figure 6: *Budget Range Sex Dolls (Double Self Portrait)* - John Beagles and Graham Ramsay (1999)

The painterly techniques associated with institutions like the commercial galleries and W.A.S.P.S Studios had been subject to a devastating critique in intellectual as well as practical terms from the avant-garde generally, and galleries like The Collective specifically.<sup>14</sup> The director of W.A.S.P.S Studios referred to this as “[the] schism between [the] conceptual world and what’s seen as the dead painting world” (Appendix 1, 139, PF). To be advanced as an artist was in many ways

synonymous with engaging with new technological challenges and new material means of expression. A member of staff at the Collective Gallery claimed that they tried to: “introduce lots of different perspectives and bewilder the artists. We have to guard against becoming self-perpetuating [even] in a tiny level, about repeating and closing down the debate. We need art to come up” (Appendix, 129, M). High value was placed on forward movement interpreted as the continuous disruption of complacent aesthetic assumptions and the search for new and more potent forms of creative expression. Engagement with this project of continual self-renewal was one of the primary means through which different types of artists and galleries distinguished themselves from those practising alongside them. Those who like ECA

<sup>14</sup> The term avant-garde was used interchangeably with ‘contemporary’, ‘conceptual’ and ‘emergent’ art. While it signified work of a radical aesthetic nature, it also seems to have lost its historical association with social justice. I use avant-garde to mean non-traditional contemporary work, namely conceptual and emergent art.



and W.A.S.P.S Studios who were not seen to engage in the relentless pursuit of novelty encountered accusations of nostalgia and conformity.

Identification with particular aesthetic positions was one of the primary means through which individual institutions gained credibility and consolidated their cultural authority, particularly in relation to funding agents. The divisions between conventional and contemporary discourses were not, however, absolutely consistent. The Collective Gallery and the *Contemporary Focus* exhibitions were particularly interesting as they lay at the heart of these compelling disputes, exposing the friction between conventional and conceptual art practices, critical judgements about what 'good' art is, and disputes about audience access and education. Individual galleries positioned themselves at different points of this aesthetic debate, signalling, in albeit complicated ways, their allegiance with particular technical practices and opposition to others.

Further, opposition was temporal and partial: competing organisations were dependent on their differences from each other, and the network generated and performed dissent and novelty as an essential means through which to maintain its cultural currency (Kuspit, 1996). When meeting a curator at the CAC, for instance, they revealed that they had in part decided to put on *Locale* in order to demonstrate that the CEC represented and actively supported a wide variety of cultural tastes (Appendix, 13, M). Echoing developments within the wider liberal establishment, difference and aesthetic innovation had accumulated a value and status in their own right within government, and therefore, within the funding agencies. A local government officer remarked that "The local arts board thinks that anything that is innovative is good and anything that's traditional is bad" (Appendix, 13, M). Given this, attempts by artist-run galleries and initiatives like *Contemporary Focus* to pursue alternative practices and aesthetic visions were neutralised by a cultural and political establishment eager to demonstrate progressiveness. Michael Russell MSP stated that "The important nature of cultural activity of all sorts is that it should be anarchic, critical, non-aligned and exciting" (Scottish Parliament, GD, 1999, p. 6). The more conventional galleries such as the CAC, the Fruitmarket Gallery, Dean Gallery, and Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art needed emergent artists to fuel their

ongoing need for diverse new material (for the institutionalisation of the avant-garde, see Ford, 1998; Green, 2002b; Hobsbawm, 1998; Hughes, 1996; McCorquodale et al, 1998; Stonor Saunders 1999; Pogglioli, 1968). Edinburgh was not unique in this regard, and in London the Turner Prize exploited tabloid outrage to invigorate Tate Britain's staid public image -- "We began to whip up press about the Turner Prize, I really should write a book about it, consciously causing controversy, trying to fan the flames" (The Tate communications director, Appendix, 175, CP). Conflict has proved productive for visual art and is strategically oriented to ensure the survival of the field as a whole. As such, performed rather than substantive rivalry appears to offer a more realistic account of the interaction between different artistic communities.

*Contemporary Focus* enabled particular institutions officially to confirm their faith in emergent art. It also crucially reaffirmed the antagonism between affirmative and subversive impulses in Edinburgh, and as such, clarified the need for each to exist as an antidote to the other. Both conventional and artist-run initiatives in Edinburgh developed a normative language and mode of conduct which was self-perpetuating, and which appeared to be oppositional whilst actually being mutually beneficial (Green, 2002b). The maintenance of this conflict, and its periodic and conspicuous resolution helped to perpetuate visual art as a necessarily diverse and progressive field of production. The network absorbed and turned apparent oppositions to its own advantage. Similarly, Scruton (1999) argues that 'preemptive kitsch' -- as developed through abstraction into constructionism and postmodernism -- has become the official style of the avant-garde and the official modernist bureaucracy. Conversely, the threat to the integrity of emergent work, which appropriation by more conventional galleries represented, compelled the 'alternative' sector in Edinburgh to reinvent itself in order to maintain the separateness and purity of its own creative ideals from establishment interests. The continuous reassertion of aesthetic marginality was therefore essential for artist-run collectives, as new forms of artistic engagement were consumed and made conventional by more established galleries in their progressive search for novelty and renewal.

Scrutinising the turn to culture in geography, Barnett argues that "the relationship

between culture and power is consistently figured around a set of antinomies that determine that the engagement with power can only ever be imagined in terms of opposition and resistance". Received understandings of culture and power privilege this "fundamental vocabulary of opposition and resistance" (Barnett, 2001, pp. 9-10). This antithetical framework could not be applied simplistically across the different Edinburgh arts institutions, or in relation to artistic groups and funding bodies within the network. My research does not, therefore, provide us with the standardised representation of power and marginality which Barnett finds so problematic: the Edinburgh arts network was much more confusing. For example, rather than conforming to a simplistic high-low art opposition, the Edinburgh network fractured according to subsidiary distinctions such as traditional, modernist and conceptual aesthetics.

In summary, *Contemporary Focus* embodied and lay at the interface between many of the debates about art and the position it occupied in the city (Green, 1999). As a self-conscious attempt to carve out a more secure space for emergent art within the city, the initiative was revealing of the ongoing struggle -- for political and financial support, public recognition, peer approval, and aesthetic legitimisation -- between different visual arts communities. Occurring as it did within the wider political, institutional and cultural dynamic of the city, *Contemporary Focus* represented a continuation of the dialogue between tradition and innovation which had animated city planners and curators alike. The exhibitions were suspended between cultural reference points across institutional frameworks and caught up within Edinburgh's past as they also suggested visual alternatives: "[It] is important Locale is challenging for people and broadens out people's perceptions of what art in Edinburgh is, or art in [the] East coast is, i.e. [it] isn't RSA type work" (curator, Appendix, 128, M). Utilising the notion of networks as an analytic tool made it possible to explore these dialogues within their setting.

## **Summary and conclusions**

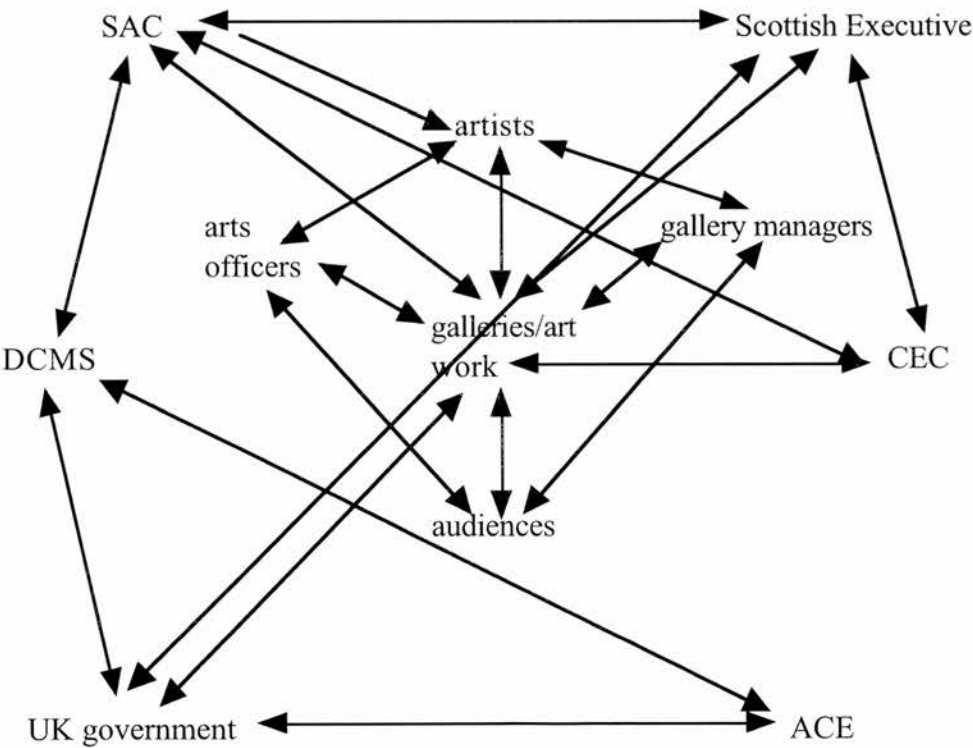
I have focused on the key actors, discourses and sources of influence within the visual arts network, highlighting their main characteristics and how they interacted



together. Art, I have argued, cannot be separated from the contexts in which it is produced: it is a disputed outcome of the negotiations between these different actors. This integrated account has attempted a more nuanced reading of the field in action by studying the embeddedness of factors, rather than by artificially extracting singular aspects in order to create a detached and convenient account. By so doing, I have remained consistent with the Foucauldian account explored in the previous chapter, and argued for the integration of factors and the negotiated and contingent nature of the field. In relation to government funding agencies in particular, I have tried to balance this contingent account alongside an appreciation of the systematic interests implicit within this movement. Strands of strategic government power were thus connected to the actions of arts institutions and related practices.

Figure 7 summarises the primary lines of communication and interaction which I propose provide the basic framework for the Edinburgh arts network.

Figure 7: The Edinburgh Arts Network II



Although again two dimensional, the diagram improves on figures 1 and 2 in introducing non-institutional actors such as audiences (discussed in chapter four) and in highlighting the dialogic rather than didactic nature of interaction between actors. These interactions, I argue, are underpinned by a series of evolving discourses about the nature and function of art, the political, cultural and geographical position of Edinburgh as a capital city, and the relative status of different professional groups and aesthetic associations. These factors emerged as key organising referents or points of distinction driving visual arts provision in the city. These discourses not only give meaning and substance to individual actors, they also provide the perceptual parameters which governed interactions between actors. Equally, the relationships between agencies, their alliances, manoeuvrings and disputes were not external to art, but were significant to its very constitution -- Anne Bevan's (1999) work and the David Hume statue (Stoddart, 1997) are illustrative of this. Discourses about art and the relations which sustain it *are* the arts network. Further, this network is not merely the backdrop within which art is cradled: it is inseparable from it. To understand art we must, therefore, understand the meanings associated with it, and the manner in which the extended body of related institutions, social and professional groups deploy these meanings to their own advantage. Attempts to carve out space and legitimacy for one's own professional interests are therefore crucial to understanding what art means and the functions to which it is applied. The various individuals, institutions and practices in the network were mobilised by the need to open up space for their very particular ideas about the social function of art. Professional status was therefore dependent on this ability to create the space for, and assert the authenticity of, their own account. What emerged was a confusing mixture of alliances and rivalries -- some declared and some hidden -- between organisations, groups of artists, policy makers, arts bureaucrats and managers and audiences. Within this, the disputed function of art continued to animate those involved.

I have shown how a network is a set of existing and potential relations. In its most basic form it is a kind of interactive map, as Figures 1, 2 and 7 illustrate. In practice, however, the complex and shifting production of social and cultural distinctions, through individual and institutional actors mobilising specific discourses, gives any

network its specific geometry: its strong and weak links, its margins and centres. This geometry also shows its power relations and how these are activated by the connections between different actors. Power is not, therefore, imposed upon the network but lives through it.

In Edinburgh, for example, modes of distinction were exercised through complicated sets of associations and disassociations which shaped operational parameters and defined different funding, management, and arts practices in relation to each other. Whilst it was possible to detect rough boundaries delineating opposing art form and stylistic, as well as professional groups, these loosely-knit associations were not absolute. They are undercut by collaborations and areas of commonality which spanned the divides, creating a crisscrossing movement of alliances and disjunctures between artistic communities. The different arts constituencies also contain internal contradictions which defied the imposition of uniform identities or coherent categories to them. The network was in particular, mobilised around discourses relating to different art forms; conventional and conceptual art; individuals; professional groups; institutions; funding bodies; Edinburgh and Glasgow, Edinburgh and London. It was apparent, that the categories of distinction circulating within the Edinburgh arts network were not entirely consistent with those projected within Bourdieu's work. Class, race, gender and ethnicity, for instance, were not openly activated as primary modes of distinction. My findings provide insight, therefore, into the finer systems of legitimisation which operated within what was a fairly consistent professional, class and racial group. Whilst Bourdieu's system of legitimisation is based upon hierarchies and oppositions, this framework proved too inflexible and limited to accommodate the array of referents drawn upon -- and the manner of their articulation -- by the actors within Edinburgh's arts network.

Whilst elements within the network worked to consolidate and generalise particular hegemonic interests and to cancel out representation from those aspects regarded as threatening to these interests, uncontested consensus did not exist within the arts network. Notwithstanding this and overlaying this series of broken dialogues, lay a pattern of aesthetic practices which, like the pieces of a jigsaw appeared to be entirely divergent until slotted together. By exploring the ties which bind funding

agents and government, galleries and artists together, I have revealed the evasive and partial practices these actors engage in, the diluted manner in which they perform their apparently contradictory roles, and the ways in which public art absorbs and thrives through conflict. The network shows how phantom separations between different cultural, aesthetic, material, institutional, spatial, and historical spheres are constructed and dissolved. As such, disruptions were pivotal to the functioning of the field as a whole, and rivalry between divergent institutions and aesthetic tastes had a performative rather than a substantive quality. The network's agents absorbed and turned apparent contradiction to their advantage, strategically deploying conflicts and disassociations alongside mutual interests. The field consisted, therefore, of an uneasy balance between complementary and conflicting forces, the relative power of which shifted and fractured through time and space, as alliances were made and broken. This proliferation of small complementary divides was consistent with the Latourian critique of modern separations (chapter two).

Realisation that resistance and difference were central to the operation of the artistic field rather than a threat to its overall integrity ratifies the Foucauldian understanding of micro webs of power, and government as active and consensual. Potentially, this understanding challenges notions about art as *either* a coherent field of activity -- and therefore an insular focus for academic inquiry -- *or* as a fatefully divided and disparate series of disconnected communities and practices. As chapters four to six reveal, art world discourses and practices were closely coupled with broader government, welfare state, market, managerial and cultural models. Coherence in an operational sense is, therefore, based upon dispute as much as co-operation: the two are in no way mutually exclusive.

## The autonomy of art

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Art has always been at the service of something ... We still suffer from the notion of art as being free (artist, Appendix, 180 , C).

The previous chapter illustrated how the network is variable. In this chapter I show how this diversity is balanced alongside more sustainable commitments. I look at the extent to which enduring beliefs about the essential separateness of art continue to resonate within contemporary arts practice. I show how the category exists as different degrees of concentration, never wholly present or absent. Although I describe the autonomous claim in this chapter, it will be interrogated in the following chapters. I argue here that the integrity of art -- as defined by artists and gallery managers and, to a certain extent, government and arts officers -- is dependent on maintaining its distance from other discredited artistic genres; from the obligation to be socially engaged (community art); from the debasing consequences of commercial exchange and the competitive rigours of the market; and from popular culture and the involvement of particular types of audiences. These factors were all cited as threatening the stability of visual art, and as such, are key to understanding how art was defined and the function it was subsequently assigned. I examine the contested nature of art as an autonomous and detached entity and highlight how arguments made about authentic practice are used to position actors within the network, and to exclude those who digress from these norms and expectations. The chapter is therefore broadly concerned with strategic differentiation, and with the manner in



which the profession exercises refusals, and thus defines itself against non-aligned elements. The notion of art as an autonomous or 'pure' entity functioned, albeit through the indirect distinctions named above, as a means through which the arts network projected itself as "a distinct social subsystem" (Bürger, 1984, p. 47).

Although I discuss state intervention in detail in chapters five and six, the play between government involvement and the capacity of the arts profession to maintain its own autonomy is present as a theme here. Artists are, however, the main focus of my attention. I suggest that the arts network perpetuates its own interests and maintains its professional identity and space (in relation to other professions, public funding agencies, art forms, and audiences) by attempting to control the definition of art -- recruiting the notion of autonomy as its primary discursive weapon. As the arguments in the previous chapter imply, however, the autonomy of art is not sustainable in empirical terms as the boundaries between art and its social context blur. Nevertheless, artists' commitment to this ideal is undeterred by these 'realities'.

### **Artistic autonomy**

There are several historical explanations for the emergence of essentialised ideas about "artistic activity as a uniquely different kind of work, with a unique, indeed transcendent, product" (Wolff, 1993, p. 17). In addition to competing definitions of autonomy, there are differing accounts about how the utilitarian and ritual functions of objects became detached from the nexus of practical life, and how the artistic field emerged. Explanations largely converge around three key developments: the evolution of the art market from its commission to individualised form, changes in relations of production, and the emergence of the arts as a social sphere.

Hauser (in Bürger, 1984, p. 38) highlights how the changing social status of artists in the beginning of the sixteenth century was driven by increased commissions (forming an art market) and demand for qualified artists which, in turn, weakened the ties between artists and the guilds. Progressively freed from obligations to patrons or individual commissions, the artistic field in the nineteenth century became increasingly autonomous, and the differences between its own activities and those of



other professions widened (Wolff, 1993). Correspondingly, artists themselves came to be idealised as unbounded individuals, free to pursue their creative inclinations where others were locked into debilitating forms of production and labour (see chapter six).

According to this production oriented account, artistic work before the Renaissance in Europe, was conducted along communal lines under the conditions shared by other workers (Hauser, 1968). Artists pursued their activities as artisans and craftsmen with common commitments and shared responsibilities (Wolff, 1993, p. 17).<sup>1</sup> Master painters worked collaboratively with apprentices rather than as single authors of their work, and credit was shared rather than attributed to the exceptional talents of one individual. Artists' products attained special status on the basis of continuing in the handicraft mode of production (as intellectuals and not craftsmen), thus maintaining immunity from the historical separation of producer from the means of production (Hinz cited in Bürger, 1984, p. 36). Similarly, Muller (cited in Bürger, 1984, p. 36) maintains that the intellectual and material aspects of artistic production were divided by the Renaissance court in response to evolving conditions of production. By continuing to maintain close control over every aspect of the production process, artists further disassociated themselves from 'lower' class trades and thus secured their enhanced status as professional individuals producing work of unique value (Fyfe, 2000; Hauser, 1968). Alterations in modes of production were crucial therefore to the development of the autonomy of art as a category of bourgeois society.

Finally, as relations of patronage evolved, art came to be recruited purely for its own significance rather than to serve a ritualistic, instructional or emblematic function within a wider social process. The aesthetic and intellectual aspects of art works gained prominence above their material functions, and art works acquired exceptional standing as non-functional, individually crafted objects. The justifications for the existence of art changed radically, and patronage came to be based on aesthetic gratification and cultural capital rather than social function. The rise of bourgeois

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<sup>1</sup> Wolff pointed out that the notion of 'high' and 'lesser' arts accompanied the emergence of the idea of genius, and thus high art became connected to individualistic rather than collective forms of expression (Wolff, 1993).

society, its seizure of political power, and increased economic strength in the eighteenth century, was accompanied by the foundation of aesthetics as a systematic philosophical discipline. This consolidated the conception of the autonomy of art as a “realm of non purposive creation and disinterested pleasure” (Kuhn cited in Bürger, 1984, p. 42). The commodification of art accompanied the historical shift from spiritual to rational and materialistic concerns (Marr, 2000). Separated from everyday life contexts, art increasingly addressed the social world in abstract terms.

Walter Benjamin (1970) substantially extends the production oriented account in particular, by linking artistic autonomy to reproduction. For Benjamin, ideas about the unique existence of art are connected to its status as an original entity and the authority of the object is dependent on its uniqueness. He refers to this quality of presence as ‘aura’, and argues that reproducing unique objects jeopardised their aura and authority. Juxtaposing the conditions of capitalist production with the developmental tendencies of art, he cites advancements in the mechanical reproduction of art as the most significant development resulting from production processes. Mass replication changed artists’ relationship with their work from being an exercise of the hand to appreciation through the eye. The speeding-up of processes of pictorial reproduction, with the photographic eye moving more quickly than the painter’s hand, increased the saturation of images to the point where light and colour could keep pace with speech. The invention of photography was central to this rapid reproduction process, and accounted for its low status relative to painting.

To counter the imprecision surrounding the category ‘autonomy’, Bürger reduces its historical typology to three elements: production, function and reception. He examines how, for instance, Sacral Art was functionally “integrated into the social institution ‘religion’”, produced collectively, and received in an institutionally collective manner (Bürger, 1984, p. 47). This useful typology exposes how autonomy relates to different aspects of the artistic cycle, and also how particular art historical movements can contain autonomous elements while resisting total conformity to the category. This understanding is central to my own thesis about artistic autonomy in Edinburgh, given my claims for the enduring existence of the

category in a broken and contradictory form. I look at four key oppositions across which autonomy, in Bürger's complex sense, is both asserted and undermined. My concern is initially with autonomy as particular types or genres of art (such as conceptualism), and with the form of the work as part of this internal categorisation process. I examine how contemporary art constructs its own autonomy in contradistinction to community and commercial art as functionally oriented art forms. I subsequently focus on reception by looking at how attitudes towards other cultures and audiences shape and reinforce the profession's ideas about art and those who do and do not engage with it. The four oppositions thus provide a means to unpack the notion of artistic autonomy.

### **"Genre differentiation"<sup>2</sup>**

For Bourdieu artistic genres "tend to cleave into a research sector and a commercial sector, two markets between which one must be wary of establishing a clear boundary, since they are merely two poles, defined in and by their antagonistic relationship of the same space" (Bourdieu, 1996b, p. 120). Bourdieu's typology draws on principal oppositions, for instance, between research ('pure production' for a restricted audience) and commercial sectors (large-scale production). These principal oppositions are intersected by subcategories such as the consecrated avant-garde and the avant-garde. Bourdieu uses this 'logic of the field' to explain the differentiation between genres such as symbolism and naturalism in literature. This framework of principal and secondary oppositions proved a valuable analytic tool for navigating through the various levels of differentiation relating to artistic autonomy. Bourdieu's concept of a consecrated avant-garde and an avant-garde mirrors my earlier discussion of the Fruitmarket and Collective galleries, and his ideas about research as opposed to commercial sectors closely relates to oppositions explored in this chapter between public and commercial art.

Bourdieu further argues that "there develops at the heart of each genre a more autonomous sector - or if you will, an avant-garde" (Bourdieu, 1996b, p. 120). In the previous chapter I examined how contemporary art fractured into

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<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu (1996, p. 117).

emergent/conceptual art, and more conventional contemporary art, both of which lay counter posed to the traditional field. Figure 8 summarises this aesthetic and professional triptych.

<i>Representational/traditional</i>	<i>Modernist</i>	<i>Conceptual/emergent</i>
Process:		
institutional	institutional	artist-run
drawing & painting (skill)	drawing, painting, montage	unskilled (idea focused)
Product:		
historical/conventional	progressive	experimental
figurative	abstract	conceptual
paintings	paintings/mixed media	installation, multi-media
pleasure (beauty)	pleasure/substance	irony/humour
Reception:		
commercial	limited sales	marginal
popular (mass appeal)	selective appeal	‘pure production’ (integrity)

Figure 8: Internal differentiation - Visual art in Edinburgh

Here I shift away from the relationship between these three generic groups of actors, and turn to the contemporary field as a whole, to examine how these practices tested and expanded the spaces and choices presented by the autonomous category of art.

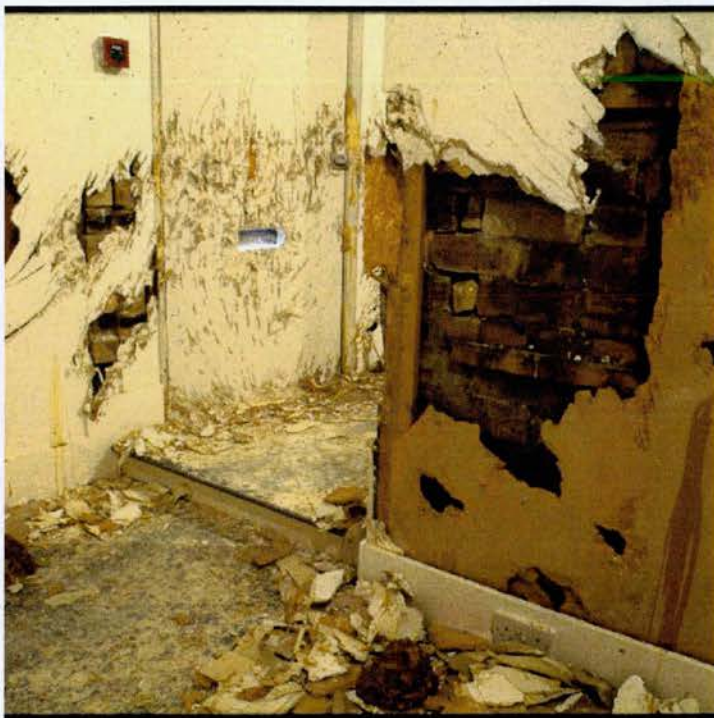
As we have seen, rooted within an understanding of art as ideological, various sociological perspectives have problematised critical and art historical assumptions about art as self-absorbed, isolated, and transcendent, and revealed the imprint of history, society, artists’ biographies, economy, material conditions, and ideology on the art work itself (Gramsci, 1971; Foucault, Bourdieu; Williams, 1973 and 1977; Eagleton, 1976a and 1976b; Berger, 1972; Wolff, 1993). Painting is not immune to

political and economic influence, but is expressive of these contexts, and as such, is ideological (Berger, 1972). I am curious about the extent to which these extra aesthetic contexts are actually acknowledged by the contemporary art world, and whether denial of the integrated social basis of art might be pivotal to maintaining the exalted status of art. It is possible, for instance, that the starkness of contemporary galleries is a necessary part of this autonomous project. With the exception of three NGoS museums, all other galleries in Edinburgh were ‘white cubes’ (McEvelley, 1999). Despite general conformity to the white cube as a form of display, however, other well established autonomous conventions were the subject of overt aesthetic play and counter play within the contemporary field. As I show, notions of autonomy were not polemically practised but were deliberately deployed and undermined by artists as part of their aesthetic repertoire. Bourdieu and Passeron referred to this ethos of irony, distraction with the exotic, and desire for distinction within the disciplines of the dominant class, as a “conformist anti-conformism”, a position which echoes my earlier contentions about contained radicalism within the contemporary field (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1995, p. 29).

Experimenting with the spatial integrity of art works was one of the means through which artists conspicuously challenged the material boundaries of the picture frame, and, therefore, the distinctiveness of the category of art itself. Ross Flemington (1999), exhibiting in *In the Summertime*, drilled holes in the hardboard mounting of his paintings, claiming this was a way of opening up and dispensing with their preciousness (Appendix, 145, GT). By carving up the body of the paintings he permeated the hard boundary separating them from the environment in which they were hung. In the *British Art Show 5* [hereafter *BAS5*],<sup>3</sup> Mike Nelson (1999) went a step further by gouging great chunks out of the Collective Gallery walls (see next page), thus eating away at the very fabric of the building. Art ingesting art. Tomako Takahashi’s (Takahashi, 1999) installation *matter* for the Stills gallery sprawled boundlessly across the floor, inflating its own presence whilst squeezing the viewing space around it. Primarily through such installation work, contemporary art expanded the boundaries of its own activities to the point where there was almost no object or

<sup>3</sup> Organised by the Hayward Gallery in London and launched in 1979/80, the *BAS* provides a survey of British art. The *BAS5* was launched in Edinburgh in 2000 and featured ten artists (out of 54) from Edinburgh and Glasgow. Held in eight galleries in the city, it subsequently toured in Southampton, Cardiff and Birmingham.

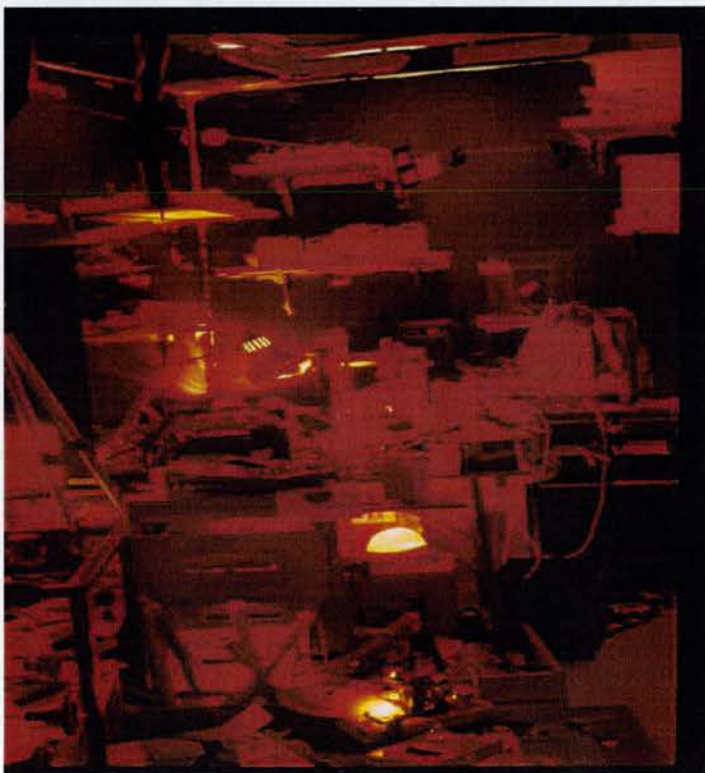




area of life, materials or subject which could not be addressed. As Scruton argues (1999), by breaking out of the picture frame the space for art is no longer constrained. Art is not, therefore, confined or autonomous in a material sense. But to what extent has art maintained its distinctiveness in relation to its aesthetic conventions and the institutional spaces in which it is displayed?

Figure 9 (top): *To the Memory of H.P. Lovecraft*, Mike Nelson (1999)

Figure 10 (bottom): *matter*, Tomako Takahashi (1999)



Chad McCail was one of a growing number of artists experimenting with alternative forms of delivery out with the traditional gallery sector. Organisations such as Out Of The Blue, an artist-run collective, melded club cultures with visual art, and other artists launched exhibitions in homes, hospitals, cinemas, and so on. Internet galleries such as eyestorm and Britart.com



further contested conventional viewing and display practices and raised interesting time-space compression issues (Harvey, 1989). They also challenged the auratic significance of work by producing multiples, and creating direct links between artists and buyer. Avoiding the disaster befalling other dotcom companies, internet galleries bypassed traditional galleries, so fuelling a boom in spending on art (Thorpe, 2002). Those working outside the 'autonomous' spaces of the white cube gallery network not only challenged the spaces within which art occurred, but also questioned the authority of these galleries as consecrating institutions, and the value they applied to the objects displayed within them. Potentially, therefore, cultural authority in the city is becoming more institutionally and spatially dispersed. New technological applications further expanded the places within which artistic labour occurred, enabling many artists to work from home on computer screens or on editing suites in institutions like the Edinburgh Film and Video Access Centre. The power and primacy of the image itself was also being reassessed by text-based work such as, Billy Childish's (2000) poems in the *BAS* 5. By displaying a poem as art Childish confronts our expectations about what constitutes art in a physical and aesthetic sense. He removes the technical parameters separating art from other creative media. The aesthetic foundations of art were further stretched by artists working with temporal substances and decaying materials, and Clara Ursitti's (1999) piece *Bill in Evolution Isn't Over Yet*, pumped out the scientifically reproduced smell of semen into the gallery, making a play on Bill Clinton's Presidential indiscretions while undermining the materiality of art.

If, as I have illustrated, art has become spatially, materially and aesthetically integrated, to what extent does the social context of the profession affect patterns of production and distribution? A conversation with a mixed media artist confirmed how closely art making was bound up with its broader social environment and the co-operative links which sustained it (Becker, 1982). The artist complained, for example, about how the 'cliqueness' of the arts network militated against craft-based work such as her own, claiming that "if you don't fit in you are excluded" (Appendix, 9, C). Exhibitions, she felt, were sanctified on the basis of who one knew. She maintained that the press was similarly nepotistic, and "*The List* [what's on magazine] is full of reviews of people by people they know, promoting all their

Figure 11: *The Artist's Real CV*, Anon (2000)

## The Artist's Real CV

### **Education**

Enthused ingenuously over a tutors theoretical stance.

Was over animated regarding a tutors practice.

Through a convoluted and vehemently denied process, I used my partners source material in my work.

Tried to light to wrong end of a cigarette when trying to impress a favourite tutor, in a no smoking zone.

I listened to a visiting lecturer bang on for about an hour, not understanding a word but nodding enthusiastically because I though he would like me and give me some good contacts.

Was alarmingly friendly to visiting curators.

### **Exhibitions**

Blanked friends at opening to catch attention of gallerist.

Stood grinning my head off for about three minutes next to a dealer, when he failed to acknowledge this I beckoned my better known partner to come over so that he would notice them and then me by default.

Flirted with gallerist to the extent that my partner became upset.

Feigned enthusiasm regarding the art practice of the gallerist's wife

I spent the money I owed my partner on rounds of drinks and food in order to stay in with a group of people who hardly knew me, who I thought could give me a show.

Shunned younger artists during group shows in order to ingratiate myself with more famous artists.

Got drunk, showed off and was sick at opening.

### **Positions Held**

Camped it up in order to befriend an openly gay critic.

Abandoned cherished beliefs in order to appear more current.

Showed off to younger artists who'd never heard of me.

Enthused over a friend's work whilst privately holding serious reservations.

I pretended to be someone else on the party guest list but was to drunk to remember how their name was spelt.

I feigned interested in Richard Deacon's work to keep a conversation going with an critic who was writing a piece about me.

Due to the lack of interest in my work I took up teaching and bitterly denounced the job for consuming all my time.

Vowed never to have an affair with a student, but realised none of them wanted my [sic] anyway.

Drunkenly tried to dance with and get off with someone in a disco after an opening only to find myself sitting next to them at an art dinner a few months later.

### **Scholarships/Awards/Residencies**

Was crawlingly polite to a collector about their unrelated banal pile of mediocre shite art.

I trashed a close friend to make a story funnier to a woman I didn't even like, but who was on the interview panel for an award I was up for.

I got asked to make photo documentation of a famous designer. I arrived late to find an open debate in progress. I shot two rolls of film of a student that I assumed was the designer, I printed up the photos of the student because I fancied her.

Collabotated [sic] with friends on an art work, yet later claimed authorship of the ideas.

Blamed the gallery technicians of a provincial gallery for bad workmanship when I turned in a really rubbish piece of work for the commission.

friends”. The raw personal ambition, cronyism and sycophancy surrounding the exhibition circuit was turned into a knowing piece of art (Figure 11). Relationship based networks were central to the overall organisation of the arts network, discriminating between the initiated and excluded, impinging upon the apparent neutrality of aesthetic judgements, and shaping and sustaining a self perpetuating cycle of production, display and consumption. Through these intrinsically social mechanisms, the network dictated whether art objects came into being in the first place, while it also contributed to their form, meaning and stature. Idealised notions of artistic autonomy were inevitably compromised through practical application, therefore, indicating the ‘impure’ ways in which discursive ideals were manifested in practice. In addition to a highly prescriptive social network, artistic production was also shaped around mundane practical and legal restrictions. The scale and shape of Paul Carter’s (1999) nuclear fall-out shelter in *Locale*, for instance, was moulded around health and safety regulations and whether the floor of the CAC could sustain 4.5 tonnes of concrete breeze blocks (Appendix, 107, HE). This example also illustrates how, as a material actor, the CAC building actively influenced the type of art produced.



Figure 12: 128 b.p.m. (*Happy Beat*), Paul Carter (1999)

Howard Becker (1982) devised an extensive list of factors affecting the making of art works, ranging from artist expectations, technical skills, conventions and practical help, to legal frameworks, distribution mechanisms and audiences. In a selection



meeting at one gallery in Edinburgh, cost, time and spatial considerations clearly affected the type of work selected (manager, artists, Appendix, 65, M). The material autonomy of the category was questionable as was the creative objectivity of the art works themselves. Rather than such conditions being imposed upon the pristine surfaces of art works, however, these factors were actually intrinsic to their very substance. In relation to Bürger's (1984) typology, it is clear that art in Edinburgh is not autonomously produced. As McEvelley points out, the Platonic ideal of "a higher metaphysical realm where form, shiningly attenuated and abstract like mathematics, is utterly disconnected from the life of human experience here below" (McEvelley, 1999, p. 11). Even Adorno (1977a), in his letter to Walter Benjamin, agreed that the autonomy of the work of art is not a prerogative. Nevertheless, these ideals, which originally informed the evolution of the white cube as a form of display, continued to provide the underlying controlling structure behind contemporary notions of artistic autonomy in Edinburgh.

It cannot be assumed, however, that deliberately undermining the conceptual and material integrity of art will necessarily destroy the autonomous status of the category 'art'. The accidental removal of a piece of art work from under a cupboard door by some cleaners during *Locale* confirmed how substantially the aesthetic parameters of the artistic category were being manipulated without actually dissolving the essential identity of the object as art -- if only for those engaged in this specialised conversation (Appendix, 110, GO). Although unrecognisable as art to the cleaner, this work was regarded as legitimate art by the curators. The contention that since "the failure of the avant-gardist intent to sublate art ... the protest of the historical avant-garde against the institution of art is accepted as *art*" (Fraschina, 1984, pp. 61-62) seems to have come home to roost. What resulted in Edinburgh was the false sublation of artistic autonomy and the institution of art. Technological advancements along with the high currency attached to innovation combined to propel contemporary work into those uncharted spatial, institutional, temporal, material and conceptual boundaries outlined above. This facilitated fleeting but illusory moments of aesthetic freedom for such artists, while ensuring the canonisation of their labours within the network (see chapter three). Even as artists threatened to explode the autonomous foundations of the category -- transforming

ready-made objects into art, dispensing with notions of skill, beauty, and mimesis, breaking the frame, and colonising the spaces previously reserved for life -- they merely consolidated the status of these actions as artistic gestures within the field itself.<sup>4</sup> To echo the previous chapter, those artists who appeared to attack 'nostalgic' ideals of artistic distinctiveness were actually firmly rooted within the extended logic of the professional field. For instance, the exhibition structure, a gallery director told me, drew 'avant-garde' artists through from ECA, to the Collective Gallery, followed by Stills, the Fruitmarket Gallery, City Art Centre, and eventually onto the Dean Gallery or the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. In 2002 the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art acquired work by Chad McCail, a Collective Gallery protégé (NGoS, GD, 2002).

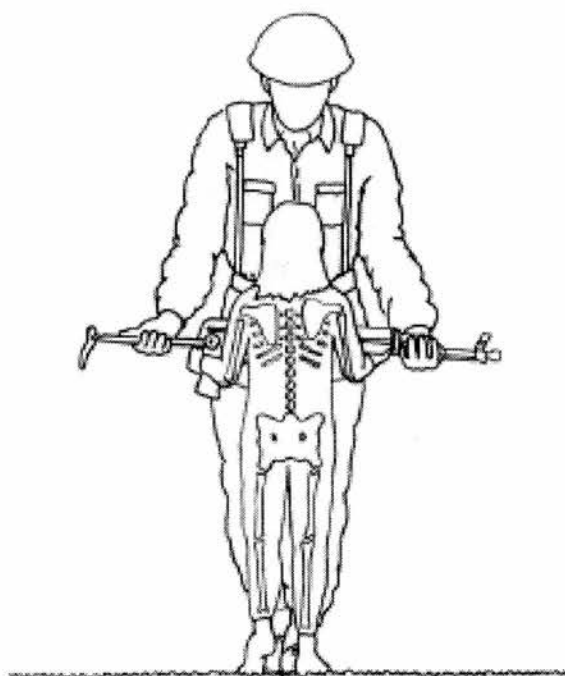


Figure 13: *Soldiers leave the armed forces* (detail), Chad McCail (1999a)

<sup>4</sup> Eric Hobsbawm (1998) argued that the avant-garde lost its ability to capture the public imagination by descending into an impoverished language of painting which abandoned the potency of older forms of delivery whilst also failing to achieve the creative expansiveness of film, photography and television.

The art network deliberately dissolved its own categories, while simultaneously commoditising this radical 'non art' as high culture. The category 'art' was so flexible it accommodated even the terms of its own destruction (as Dadaists and Duchamp had famously discovered). Disruptions to the boundaries of acceptability were pivotal to the functioning of the field, which became increasingly reliant on the deliberate manufacture, denial, and appropriation of dissent. In a Latourian sense, the arts network was involved in the construction and dissolution of phantom separations between different cultural, aesthetic, material, spatial, and institutional spheres.

These artists neither called for the destruction of the elected distance between art and life, nor challenged the status of art as a special category of expression.<sup>5</sup> Rather, they called for even greater flexibility of artistic definition, so further expanding the definition and the material territory of art into areas of life previously expunged from it. One of the *BAS5* curators confirmed that this was "an age where there is no aesthetic yardstick" (Coles, 2000, p. 10). The space for art, and the identifiable edges of its definition as art, were extended and made more permeable rather than dissolved completely. As Bell pointed out, art has always existed according to "the internal dynamics of the institution" that is painting (Bell, 1999, p. 1). In Edinburgh, this institution had simply become more tenacious at adjusting its own conventions.

According to Reise (1997, p. 253), throughout the twentieth century artistic form gradually moved towards embodying its own relevance. Clement Greenberg was a famous proponent of this reduction of art to its formal material properties.

Notwithstanding the above examples, in general the conceptual art of the 1990s in Edinburgh was a good deal more socially informed than the post-painterly abstraction Greenberg advocated in the 1960s and 70s. Adorno provides one explanation for this reintegration, arguing that the auratic element of the work of art has declined, in part because of its reproducibility, but also "because of the fulfilment of its own 'autonomous formal laws'" (Adorno, 1977a, pp. 122-123). Extreme attempts at self-containment, such as encapsulated by Ad Reinhart's work (Bell, 1999), have come to

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<sup>5</sup> Bürger referred to this as the affirmative character of art in bourgeois society, which "by realising the image of a better order in fiction... relieves the existing society of the pressure of those forces that make for change. They are assigned to confinement in the ideal sphere" (1984, p. 50)



be regarded as counter productive, draining art of its socio-spiritual resonance. In contrast, the avant-garde in Edinburgh used notions of artistic autonomy as an aesthetic resource, preferring to play with the boundaries between art and non art rather than refine narrow definitions of art as a 'pure' entity. Conversely, the category 'art' is no longer dependent on identifiable separations between it and everyday life, other art forms, or galleries as institutions.

Systematic attempts to undermine the essential quality of the object itself had, according to others, also resulted in a crisis of art criticism (Scruton, 1999). Devoid of the confidence necessary to challenge the notion that anything can pass as art has resulted in criticism descending into mechanical description (Scruton, 1999). Indeed, complaints were regularly made about the poverty of art criticism in Scotland. I would suggest that, the more self-conscious art became, and the more it simultaneously abandoned notions of the intrinsic quality of particular objects, the more it exposed its own power to award value according to the insular and contrary demands of the profession itself. As such, art became the art world. It did not exist outside this highly specialised system of conceptualisation, production, and consecration. In Edinburgh, for instance, even the illusion of artistic autonomy was sustained by a private market or public subsidy, both of which exhibited very particular aesthetic and ideological conventions. The autonomy of art is only therefore viable as an internal description, as art works have little substance outside these structuring factors. Critics, like art, reflect the relative vibrancy or poverty of this structuring system at different points in its social history.

As artists flirted with the edges of acceptability and the boundaries between art and non art became more diffuse, the potency of these 'radical' challenges was further undermined by the esoteric nature of the attack itself:

there is little doubt that the public at large is bemused by the contemporary art scene, which seems intent on alienating anyone who might like to become interested in it. It is all very well for the British Art Show to bring its circus to town, with its clowns and freaks and performing artistes, but the work on show seems as if it has been created in a vacuum, without any regard to public taste or demand. It is self-indulgence taken to ludicrous levels. The result is

art that is more intent on repelling than attracting, which, like a bellicose tabloid, goes for a cheap reaction as if provocation were an end in itself. ... Thus any object rescued from a council tip can be interpreted as art as long as it is stuck in a gallery and labelled pretentiously (Taylor, 2000, p. 17).

The maintenance of artistic autonomy as a flexibility commodity had its costs. Much contemporary art necessarily remained aloof from public and critical cultures, immured within the confines of increasingly esoteric standards, unable, or unwilling, effectively to communicate these values into the public sphere. For example, of the *BAS5*, a member of the public commented that “I like to look at something I can understand, like a landscape. A dot in the middle of the canvas does nothing for me except make me think the artist is laughing all the way to the bank” (McIntosh, 2000). Additionally, *Absolut Open - New Art from Scotland* (Inverleith House - Royal Botanic Garden, 2000), an exhibition sponsored by Absolut Vodka, showcased thirty contemporary Scottish artists, received scathing comments in the visitors book (Inverleith House - Royal Botanic Garden, 2000, GD), such as “Absolut rubbish”, and “Absolut pish”. As one artist acknowledged, “people become insecure, [and there is all] this anxiety about what’s it all about? How am I supposed to respond?” (Appendix, 22 , C). Despite the best intentions of some artists, work which challenged the autonomous conventions of art was alienating for a public which tended conservatively to cling to recognisable aesthetic conventions. As I shall show in the section on popular culture, such art was also valued by many involved for precisely the reasons it was reviled by others. Such conflict was necessary for its very constitution as art.

### **Art and its autonomy - the case of community art**

Having explored how the contemporary field constitutes and contests the category of art internally, I now turn to categorisation as comparison, by looking at how it frames its own activities in contra-distinction to those of the community arts sector.

Edinburgh as a city has a long history of engagement with community art. In addition to numerous projects, programmes and events held by mainstream arts organisations, the city also boasts four dedicated community art centres, -- Craigmillar Festival Society, North Edinburgh Arts, Wester Hailes Arts and Leisure, and the Access to

Cultural Industries project. Here I concentrate on attitudes towards community art as expressed by mainstream (as opposed to community arts) professionals within the Edinburgh arts network.

Williams argued that “the category of ‘art’ is normally and even insistently applied to works which have no other purpose but to be works of art... This definition by purpose, by an in effect autonomous intention, is perhaps the most common modern justification of the category” (Williams, 1997, p. 317). Arrived at during the eighteenth century, this consensus provided the basic value framework through which the contemporary field viewed community art. As one artist remarked: “The beauty of art is that it’s intrinsically useless, but we still do it because it means something to us. [We] have to culturally produce to affirm and question ourselves and make sense of where we are” (artist, Appendix, 131, C). I suggest that by destabilising and misreading this privileged systems of signs, which denoted art as aesthetic/autonomous from non art as functional/integrated, community art placed itself outside the realm of the artistic. This basic opposition was mobilised by arts professionals to suggest a hierarchical disparity between art forms as well as between different kinds of artists and audiences. The categorisation of art mirrors the categorisation of audiences. The production of art cannot be separated from its reception.

The community art model attempted to negate the category of individual creation in bourgeois society, unmask the art market, sublate art as a sphere separate from the praxis of life, and eliminate the antithesis between producer and recipient (Bürger, 1984, pp. 52-54). As such, the community arts movement provided a categorical link between the counter impulses of the autonomous category of art, the avant-garde in its original socially committed form, and nineteenth century ‘reforming’ designs. From its inception in the early 1970s as a socialist community-based alternative to the fine arts establishment (Kelly 1984), community art has subsequently attained widespread acceptance as a legitimate form of arts development. Projects such as Craigmillar Festival Society, WHALE (Wester Hailes Arts and Leisure) and North Edinburgh arts receive CEC funding to undertake community festivals, arts projects, workshops, training and exhibitions. By attempting to recover the integrated social

foundations of art, community artists hark back to its sacral and courtly functions. In Edinburgh, however, these integrated aspirations were unevenly applied across the population, and community arts practices became the repository for a reforming impulse which was not considered appropriate for more middle-class cultural pursuits and audiences. Funding criteria, for instance, routinely required evidence of some form of ‘alteration’ undertaken by participants in community projects, whereas equivalent expectations were not applied to opera or gallery attenders.

Artistic ‘aura’ was dependent upon sublime abstraction and separation from the praxis of life, and community art fatally digressed in both these regards. It was functionally integrated and therefore according to Bürger’s (1984) typology could not be considered artistically autonomous. At a visual arts consultation meeting, for example, a conceptual artist remarked that “community art should be a division of social work ... it’s not about art, it’s about regeneration” (Appendix, 66). The closer artists were to the fine art model of autonomous creativity, the higher their status within the arts network. The category of art, compellingly rooted within autonomous notions of creativity, was secured as the singular preserve of professional artists rather than amateur or community practitioners (Appendix, 165, S). The ex-director of the SAC remarked that there “is a terrible snobbishness about artists who decide to do work in the community” (Appendix, 66, CM). She criticised those holding such opinions for having a “very narrow and purist approach” to their work, the self-referentiality of which “will eventually make this art less relevant and lead to its being irrelevant”.

A gallery education officer who worked on a “Community Film-Making Project” (Fruitmarket Gallery, 2000, p. 12) with young people from Craigmillar -- one of the primary Social Inclusion Partnerships [hereafter SIPS] in Edinburgh -- confided his resentment about the lack of respect other members of staff gave to this work.<sup>6</sup> He was forced to hang the exhibition around exposed water pipes, book stands, and other intruding objects around the gallery entrance, having been promised hanging space within the gallery itself. He grumbled that “you wouldn’t believe the hassle I’ve had

<sup>6</sup> SIPS replaced the former Urban Aid and Priority Partnership Areas which attracted substantial European Union funding to regenerate areas of ‘multiple deprivation’. Established by the Labour government in 1997 under the ‘social inclusion’ mantle, SIPS roughly correspond to the geographical/social boundaries established by the earlier programmes.

getting a place for them in the gallery at all” (Appendix 1, 79, HE). The autonomy of art discourse in part secured and mythologised its distance from social imperatives and mass cultural conventions by creating impeccable, colourless spatial sanctities in which art could be displayed unimpeded by the interruption of everyday life.

“Bareness and lack of ornamentation encourage the asceticism which leads to the beatific vision” (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991, p. 174). The white cube framed and protected the distinctiveness of art objects, and prevented them from having to jostle for space and attention among everyday materials. The religious silence, minimalist aestheticism and lack of information all confirmed this as a sacred place of contemplation and reverence:

The eternity suggested in our exhibitions spaces ... is a specific sensibility, with specific limitations and conditionings ... the white cube suggests the eternal ratification of the claims of the caste or groups sharing that sensibility. As a ritual place of meeting for members of that caste or group, it censors out the world of social variation, promoting a sense of the sole reality of its own point of view and, consequently, its endurance or eternal rightness. Seen thus, the endurance of a certain power structure is the end for which the sympathetic magic of the white cube is devised (McEvelley, 1999, p. 9).

Community art did not conform to these expectations, or command the necessary social and artistic authority to claim its place within this antiseptic environment. Exclusion took on a spatial as well as an aesthetic and social dimension therefore with the maintenance of a physical distance between professional and community art preserving the ‘purity’ of the gallery space for the former. Aesthetic authority and discursive power were expressed spatially, written into the very geography of artistic production and exhibition practices in the city (Rose, 1997a).

The emphasis placed on process or end product also denoted the legitimacy of the objects produced. These judgements coincided with a parallel delineation between amateur and professional practice, the former of which emphasised process above product. When in 1999 Bridget McConnell, a community arts officer from Fife Council, was appointed director of Cultural and Leisure Services at Glasgow City Council, an artist despaired that “the biggest galleries network in Europe is run by a community artist who knows nothing” (Appendix, 107, HE). By virtue of its



process, function and design, community art was not seen to qualify as art in any creatively meaningful or professional sense. Consequently, those engaged in it were considered unqualified to dabble with the consecrated spaces of its autonomous realm. Artistic objects directed towards inartistic ends sacrificed their charismatic status as the central focus of creative production, and consequently this undermined their autonomy. Community art stood accused of marginalising art within its practice -- it was intermittently referred to as lacking artistic standards, and there was an underlying supposition that “community arts uses failed artists” -- and of inverting the status of the object itself by elevating process, participant needs, and social outcomes (arts manager, Appendix, 79, HE). The genre also favours collective production and so diminished the status of the individual artist as sole creator, breaking the direct auratic link between object and artist’s hand. The individualising of artistic production and reception had been accompanied an underlying suspicion of the collective; community art functioned as the antithesis of individually-conceived, socially abstract, and object-focused autonomous art. Further, it introduced social perspectives which did not involve “the objectification of the self understanding of the bourgeois class” (Bürger, 1984, p. 47).

Contextualised, situated, and institutional theories of art demystify the creative process, dislodge the primacy of the artist as insular mediator, and threaten to return them and their profession to the quotidian conditions within which they occur. Firmly rooted within such contexts, community art in Edinburgh similarly exposed contemporary art in the raw, pulling our gaze down from the heavens by subjecting the elevated, transcendent and universal status of art to local laws and conditions. Given this, contemporary artists were careful to reinforce the distance and distinction between their own activities and those of community artists, whom in turn articulated a sense of professional otherness: “I’m doing a college course and there’s even a hierarchy working there, and we’re [as community artists] seen as being mad and fine artists are up there and we’re down there” (community artist, Appendix, 116, CP).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Interestingly this sense of professional marginalisation was also shared by contemporary artists, and on failing to receive an SAC award one such artist remarked that “such is the existence of a contemporary art group” (Appendix, 89, GO (General observation)).



The craft-based practices of community art were also key to its low status among contemporary artists. Craft and community art have traditionally been associated with materiality and technique rather than ideas, and Romantic visions of processes rooted within either a rural folk tradition or an urban community ideal. Artist Nina Saunders maintains that: “I really wouldn’t like my work to be described as craft. On a very basic level, because it’s not about functional objects. I feel very strongly that for me being an artist it’s about the ideas and not the techniques” (Saunders, 1999, p. 17).

The materiality, utility, and conceptual naivety of community art therefore undermined its claim to artistic credibility. The distance from social production intrinsic to contemporary art provided it with freedom through non commitment and the absence of consequences necessary for the field to maintain its critical consciousness (Bürger, 1984, p. 49-50). Art, as Adorno conferred, was valued for offering “temporary freedom from the compulsion of practical goals” (Adorno, 1997c, p. 193). One artist even suggested that craft should not be included in a proposed CEC Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy (Appendix, 110, GO). The following discussion, held at a public forum, also revealed how the same artist struggled to accept Chad McCail’s refusal to distinguish between art and utility.

- Chad McCail I mean, [I] think [the term] illustrator is used as a sort of derogatory term in fine art and I think that’s a real mistake, and I think of myself as a sort of illustrator. I think that distinction between illustration and art is uh, very dubious.
- Artist I mean I think you go further than being an illustrator ... you’re using it radically/
- Chad McCail /well, as a different end/
- Artist /yeah, so therefore it’s not, I think it’s oversimplifying it a little what you’re talking about illustration. You’ve turned it into a very radical tool and very very direct, you know, it does communicate very directly because you’ve used that tool and the ideas are (Appendix, 133, PF).

Only by transforming the method and placing it within accepted methodological and conceptual parameters, could the artist accept McCail’s illustration-based work as art.

This hierarchical distinction between functional and dysfunctional techniques was commonly made by contemporary artists and its audiences: “in some figurative and sculptural work craft is very important, but craft isn’t important to me, and when I’m making things that are faultless craft wise people don’t seem to like them ...” (artist, Appendix, 170, GT). Conversely, while rejecting art’s utility, some contemporary artists regarded their work as elevated above superficial aesthetic pleasures such as the enjoyment derived from decoration: “The best art is visual, visible philosophy, and it informs the cultural climate on different levels and by a range of routes influencing other cultural forms. We do not need to apologise and it is neither entertainment nor decoration” (artist, Appendix, 133, PF). The denial of pleasure within what Bourdieu (1996) called ‘the love of art’ was further consolidated through reference to a long history of intellectual engagement (Stair, 1999), another notable absence from the community art repertoire. Seriousness had become a conventional signifier of art proper. Perhaps inevitably, then, irreverent humour became an anti-art device adopted by certain artists to undercut the intellectual seriousness of more conventional work.

The accumulating layers of distinction generated by the autonomy principle alerted me to the fact that aesthetic codes and cultural preferences were neither as explicitly nor as uniformly class-bound as Bourdieu suggests (see chapter one, pp. 15-22). Consequently, I was uncomfortable with analysing cultural products or modes of operation simply by tracing them back to their original class conception. Usefully, Bennett had suggested that “in so far as cultural practice organises relations of distinction, it tends to be organised as a series of dichotomies. But we are unwilling to reduce these diverse dichotomies to a single core structure of which everything else would be the expression” (Bennett, 1999, p. 263). In Edinburgh, for instance, I would argue that a number of distinctive social groups had coalesced around aesthetic conventions such as traditional or contemporary art and contemporary or community art. These divisions existed within social and class parameters but they also cut across them. Recognising this had initially raised the possibility that alliances based around different art forms were more, or at least equally, compelling means of distinction as cultural preferences defined by strict class, gender or educational group.

The aesthetic, I realised, could not be reduced to class parameters as it was also constituted by counter points and threats internal to particular social groups. Maintaining this balance -- conceptually, methodologically, and analytically -- between diffused and structured readings of power has been a recurring theme in my research. By uncovering internal fractures I believe it has been possible to introduce nuances of difference into polarised debates, largely conducted along class lines, about different arts cultures, while also maintaining responsiveness to these basic structural and power laden positions. As Bennett contended, "power and prestige flow through these configurations, or are staged in them, rather than conceiving them either as inherently aligned with or against power, or as the secondary manifestation of a structure of power that is defined elsewhere" (Bennett, 1999, p. 263).

Accordingly, in Edinburgh the basic opposition between autonomous and socially integrated categories of art was underpinned by the following series of internal secondary distinctions. Through this conceptual framework the 'contemporary' field positioned itself as different to 'community art'. The typology outlined in Figure 14 highlights the elaborate strands of distinction which made up the autonomy of art as a category of understanding. Although presented as oppositional, I would argue that inconsistencies actually characterise the relationship between categories, and it is important to remember that these discourses, consistent and inconsistent, in combination made up the arts network as a conceptually elaborate field.

My evidence points, however, towards an increased shifting and melding of oppositional categories -- many of which existed in largely performative or rhetorical terms, and actually operated to the mutual advantage of protagonists -- rather than towards the progressive polarisation of categories of distinction. In relation to community arts practice, for instance, the movement across boundaries in part came about as a result of financial difficulties. The Labour New Deal for the unemployed restricted the length of time artists could claim Job Seekers allowance: this compelled many artists to undertake community arts work to supplement their income. New funding agreements also obliged galleries to conduct more education, access, and audience development work. Artistic autonomy was becoming progressively

Figure 14: Contemporary and community art

<i>Contemporary/autonomous art</i>	<i>Community/functional art</i>
Producers:	
individually created	collectively created
artists	social workers
professional	amateur
Function:	
artistic autonomy	social function (personal development/ therapy, social reform, regeneration)
life enhancing	social engineering
confirmation	education
individual gratification	communal effects (social welfare)
Process:	
product centred	process based
exhibition/display ( <i>viewing</i> )	participation ( <i>doing</i> )
elevated display	integrated performance
white cube	library, community centre, corridor, school
Product:	
skilful	content/process based
intellectual/aesthetic lineage	'authentic' expression (non art)
art	real life
sublime 'aura'	utilitarian basis
rational	sensory
Reception:	
individual reception	collective effects
contemplative	involving
disinterested critic (objective)	lack of critical distance (subjective)
considered response	instant gratification
high status	low status

dependent on funding premised on at least an official commitment to art as a socially-integrated practice (see chapter five). The introduction of the National Lottery with its public benefit clause exacerbated this trend. Nevertheless, the subsequent increase in access work undertaken by arts organisations was still resisted by some galleries, and this work was commonly treated as a distraction from the ‘real’ practice of engaging with professional art. One artist confided that he knew one gallery simply undertook education and outreach work in order to maintain its exhibition programme (Appendix, 167, GT). Pragmatically, however, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the boundaries between categories, a finding which contradicts Bourdieu’s contention about the literary field as tending “more and more to organise itself around common oppositions” (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 120). Although the oppositional principles detailed above existed as compelling organisational referents, their articulation, and the relative level of commitment given to them varied within and across different institutions, individuals, and groups of actors. Oppositional categories were never either completely reduced or upheld within the Edinburgh arts network.

## **Art and money**

I now turn to a different set of principal oppositions to examine the troubled correlation between art and money in Edinburgh. Wolff noted that “the Romantic idea of the artist as one of the few people unaffected by capitalist relations and market constraints persists” (Wolff, 1993, p. 18). For Vazquez, however, artists cannot resist the draw and reach of the art market, and their work is destined for a market that absorbs them, affects the content and form of their work, and places limits on creative potential and individuality (Vasquez, 1973). Vazquez’s argument treats economic influence as a factor separate from, and consequently imposed onto, artistic production. My findings in contrast suggest economic considerations were implicated within both the production of works themselves, as well as the substance and actions of the Edinburgh arts network. Adrian Wiszniewski claimed he added colour to his work after he had enough money on leaving art college: “I used to have to keep it [artwork] cheap, in black and white, but now I exhibit more they [art works] can be in colour and can have a more sculptural quality” (Appendix, 165,



GT). Economic considerations figure highly in Edinburgh. Chad McCail who exhibited in *Evolution Isn't Over Yet* also explained that he had begun to add colour to his work because “[I] can make cash out of selling these” (Appendix, 101, GT).

Figure 15: *Money is Destroyed*, Chad McCail (1999)



The relative wealth of individual artists affects the style, scale and intricacy of their work, as well as those materials with which it was rendered, the amount produced, and where and how the work was exhibited. Accordingly, creative ‘freedom’ was unevenly distributed, following underlying patterns of economic privilege and market appeal which advantaged certain artists and institutions above others.

Visual art in Edinburgh seems not to be, therefore, the release of pre-existent impulses (Macherey, 1978), but to be determined within particular structures -- material, economic, political, personal, and so on -- and by particular agents. Rather than dwell on the economic influences on art works themselves, I became interested in why the relationship between art and money seemed to be shrouded with foreboding, stigma, imprecation and refusal. As Fairfield notes, “The puritanical, philistine British public have always liked to think of artists as poor, bohemian and sexy” (Fairfield, 2002, p. 22). One possible explanation lay in arguments proffered by Adorno and Benjamin, who maintained that artistic autonomy as a form of material purity was undermined by capitalist and technological contexts of re/production. According to Adorno, both art and kitsch “are torn halves of an integral freedom, to which, however, they do not add up” (Adorno, 1977a, p. 123).

Even those like Wolff who challenge the “myth of divine inspiration” and recognise that “art is *always* ‘manufacture’ and consequently equivalent, but not superior to other forms of work”, concede that under the dehumanising and alienating conditions of capitalist labour, artistic work loses its freedom and creativity (Wolff, 1993, p. 12). For Bourdieu:

The denial of economic interest ... finds its favourite refuge in the domain of art and culture, the site of pure consumption - of money, of course, but also of time convertible into money. The world of art, a sacred island systematically and ostentatiously opposed to the profane world of production, a sanctuary for gratuitous, disinterested activity in a universe given over to money and self interest offers, like theology in a past epoch, an imaginary anthropology brought about by the denial of all the negations really brought about by the economy (Bourdieu, 1977 in Fowler, 1998, p. 22).

The substance of this refusal to concede the economic basis of art, and the manner in which money and the material ambitions of artists were involved in its very construction, was evident in Edinburgh.

While there was a clear acceptance, and indeed celebration of commercial success among certain artists -- in England the relationship between the Young British Artists (yBa's) and Charles Saatchi in the 1990s gained iconic status (Stallabrass, 1999)<sup>8</sup> -- widespread reluctance to embrace commercial imperatives remained within the Edinburgh network. One artist told me two stories illustrative of the fraught relationship between art and money. She recalled how at art college visiting speakers, most of whom worked in advertising, repeatedly apologised for their commercial work, and explained that they intended to give this up in order to return to making pure art. The speakers were eager to direct attention to their art work -- “most of which was pretty crap” -- and so detract attention from what they regarded as their less worthwhile commercial activities (Appendix, 104, IN). Another artist, who had a studio at the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop [hereafter ESW], tried making small metal picture frames with floral designs to sell. Apparently he could “knock them off pretty quickly”, and successfully sold them in the Edinburgh Festival, thus

<sup>8</sup> Ivan Massow, chairman of the ICA, wrote that “But we’ve now reached a situation where a new generation of art students go to college with the idea of becoming rich and famous like their idols Emin and Damien Hirst, to act like rock stars instead of aspiring to artistic excellence through a tangible medium” (Massow, 2002, p. 11).

subsidising his art work for the proceeding year. Unfortunately, ESW had a policy of not allowing artists to undertake commercial work on their premises, and his activities attracted disapproval, despite the fact that producing popular and saleable pieces was considerably preferable to doing a bar job. By moving too far from the essential core activity of being an artist (Becker, 1982), namely singularly devoting his time to making art work, the artist jeopardised his claim to identity as an artist and therefore his place within the network. Another artist related the same tale with respect to the Edinburgh Printmakers Gallery (Appendix, 9, C). Both workshops clearly enforced policies which discriminated against art work of a commercial nature, implying that such conventions would “compromise the integrity of their art work” perhaps by submitting it to the material temptations of the popular (glass maker, Appendix, 166, CP).

As these examples demonstrate, art proper was defined by its uselessness, uniqueness as a single object, lack of commercial or popular appeal, and its non-commercial nature. Replication undertaken for commercial gain shifted the objects from art to non art status. Art galleries aspire to a significance which elevates them above the vulgarity of shop floor exchanges. The cultural capital and market value of art was based upon its capacity to *be* more than a raw commodity.

Artistic and intellectual realms converged in this regard. Adorno (1977c) has conspicuously spearheaded intellectual resistance to autonomous works of art succumbing to consumption, arguing that the market “... today unhesitatingly mutilates culture” (Adorno, 1991, p. 112). This opposition between fine/real art (publicly funded) and commercial work reflects the “two independent and hierarchized principles of differentiation” suggested by Bourdieu, in which the literary field organises itself into either ‘pure production’ destined for a market restricted to producers, or ‘large scale production’ oriented towards satisfying the demands of a wide audience (Bourdieu, 1996b, p. 113-121). This principal opposition “reproduces the founding rupture with the economic order, which is at the root of the field of restricted production” (Bourdieu, 1996b, p. 121). To be autonomous, art must not be commercial. As one artist declared, “[You] can’t measure [the] visual arts in business terms” (Appendix, 117, M).



Those artists who, like Jack Vettriano, produced conventional work and thus courted commercial success, were treated with suspicion. Alongside Andrew Vicari, Fife-born Vettriano has recently been Britain's most commercially successful artist (Jeffries, 2001). Following a long-standing feud with Duncan Macmillan, Vettriano abandoned Edinburgh for London, claiming he had been driven out by aggressive criticism and the flagrant lack of respect for his work within Edinburgh's art world. Vettriano's work, which pervades Edinburgh's pubs, cafes, poster shops and homes, was damned as formulaic, commercial and without emotional quality (see Figure 16).

We live in a consumer society, where, dutiful units of consumption, we willingly accept the illusion of choice in exchange for the comfort of our existence. Our individuality is radically circumscribed, but we replace it with the sham distinction of the designer label, the aspiration to status of the coveted car. Art remains a place where we can rise above those limitations, make real choices, debate real values, celebrate our individuality, make judgements. If it is just another function of the market, if its meaning is not more than a balance sheet -- and these are the implications of Vettriano's insistence that his commercial success, the sum of the sales of his marketed commodity, entitle him to claim significance as an artist -- then we have sold the pass. We are no longer a civilisation. Only a market place (Macmillan, 1999).

Despite government calls for financial accountability, efficient management and extending the appeal of art to broader audiences, the commercial success and popular acclaim of artists such as Vettriano were not considered valid measures of worth. The autonomous form, content and purpose of art was thus appealed to as an antidote to commercial exchange and to those hollow material ambitions it bred.

Arguments about artistic authenticity are, therefore, arguments about positioning within the arts network, and to be ejected from the network (as was Vettriano), was to be inauthentic. In turn authenticity was based on the art network's own criteria. To transgress was to court professional marginalisation. Appropriate and inappropriate forms of transgression were governed by complicated behavioural codes. As the aesthetic sphere was largely perceived to be immune from the principles of profit maximisation, unlike other spheres of cultural activity such as

advertising, it corresponded that its production should be protected from commercially inclined artists and the corrupting influence of capitalist society and its misinformed advocates. Peter Doig, for example, commented on how difficult it was to become established as an artist as there were “populist artists who were everywhere” (Appendix, 14, PV). He conjured up a much vaunted image of commercial artists swamping the art market and distracting the public from ‘real’ works of art.



Figure 16: *The Singing Butler*, Jack Vettriano (1997)

In contrast, WASPS Studio artists largely operated as small business entrepreneurs. According to the director of one contemporary gallery there was “a big difference between them and the artists we work with, I’ve never seen such a skint group” (Appendix, 15, M). Financial hardship was, however, considered preferable to sacrificing creative vision to an invariable commercial market and damaging one’s cultural capital and professional reputation. SAC research revealed that “Nearly 50 percent of artists earn less than £5,000 from their artistic activity” for instance (SAC, OP, 1997, p. 4). In the words of one artist, “you have to be quite resilient to work in it as you fund it, it doesn’t fund you” (Appendix, 132, M). For another, “no one here’s doing this stuff to get rich, [we] are putting out ideas of culture and what art is” (Appendix, 112, IN). Economic capital was separable from symbolic capital (Fowler, 1998).



Although not actively courting financial hardship (Fowler, 1999), an inverse status was nevertheless attached to it. Lack of funding and official sanction signalled authenticity of voice and proffered anti-establishment credibility by virtue of the marginality implied. Public and private funding were at once sources of hope and anxiety, and the anticipated impact of their involvement was feared. As one artist exhibiting in the Becks Futures Award stated, “The whole show is about Becks, the artists are just the middle men, it’s not really about art” (Appendix, 170, GT). Notwithstanding this, a small number of artists openly declared an intent to make money: in these instances, conspicuous conformity was reframed and accepted as a radical gesture.

One such artist remarked that “art is a business and lots of people take that as a given” (Appendix, 112, PF). Indeed, as the concept of the ‘creative industries’ became more resonant in economic as well as rhetorical terms (chapter five), the pressure to become more efficient and economically viable invoked a more intense confusion of identity and purpose within the arts sector, particularly with regard to the relationship between art and money.<sup>9</sup> Publicly highlighting the interdependency of the “publicly-invested cultural sector”, and the “commercially-driven creative industries” (Scottish Enterprise, AP, 2000a, p. 1.2), Kevin Kane, head of the creative industries team at the employment/development quango Scottish Enterprise [hereafter SE], privately confided to me that “we use the distinction between the creative and cultural industries as the word cultural puts off the business sector, they retreat when they hear it but they’re more comfortable with their understanding of creative industries as it is closer to their aims” (Appendix, 166, CP). The antipathy between art and business was clearly mutual, although Kane also warned that the commercial sector, aided by SE, were far more adept at exploiting the cultural industries for their own ends -- principally “as an R&D [research and development] laboratory for the creative industries” (SE, PR, 2000b, p. 3.3):

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<sup>9</sup> The creative industries were generally defined as advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and television and radio, basically the more commercially viable and utilitarian art forms. The cultural industries were recognised as the traditional art forms such as visual art, literature, dance, theatre, and other non-commercial and/or publicly funded art forms.

It's about professionalising the sector. The cultural industries need to engage in this. They need to sort out their priorities and organise themselves. It's going to be hard to convince anyone else of what is important to them if they don't know what this is themselves, they must stop recoiling from the industries side and learn to look for the opportunities (Kane, Appendix, 166, C).

Reluctance to engage constructively with commercial practices, partners and opportunities resulted in the marginalisation of the cultural sector within the wider economic network. Becker (1982) also noted that a preference for 'gentlemen's' agreements, along with a lack of financial skills, left artists vulnerable in contractual and legal relationships. As such, the autonomous pretensions of visual art restricted artists' capacity to defend their professional interests and be economically viable. While this strengthened the case for public subsidy, it also perpetuated their growing exploitation by voracious commercial enterprises in search of creativity.

Despite protestations about artistic autonomy as antithetical to the private market, the relationship between public and private practices were not consistently confrontational -- witness the rise in blockbuster exhibitions, sponsored refurbishments, exhibitions and art prizes -- but was individually differentiated rather than collectively coherent. Earned income varied dramatically across arts organisations, for instance, suggesting an uneven receptivity towards private money. Although the artistic realm unified around a central opposition between artistic autonomy and money -- corporate sponsorship actually increased substantially in Scotland, climbing by 35 percent to a record £16 million in 1999-2000, although this only amounted to 11.9 and 16 percent of overall funding in the two years (Peacock, 2000, pp. 30-38) -- my research clearly supports Bourdieu's statement that secondary oppositions also create internal differentiation which do not affect overall integrity (Bourdieu, 1996b). My thesis differs from Bourdieu's views, however, as I regard these internal differentiations as varying across institutions and individuals, and as being more pervasive and less consistent, therefore than his symmetrical sub-opposition framework implies. This would again re-inforce my conception of the art world as existing through a network of contacts, discourses and interactions rather than as parallel, hierarchical or dichotomous relations.

The texture of these relationships between welfare state, private finance and the artistic realm also evolved unevenly over time, as traditional forms of state patronage adjusted and/or were progressively usurped by new sources of wealth framed within adjusting value systems. Ironically, high art or avant-garde refinement, distance, and 'neutrality', neatly coincided with the image many companies aspired towards (Wu, 1989).<sup>10</sup> The strategic suspension of autonomous principles in relation to money (by art galleries), was therefore reflected in a pattern of sponsorship which echoed class cultures and reflected the economic stratification of society. Classical art and the bourgeois avant-garde were favoured -- the National Galleries of Scotland, the Fruitmarket Gallery, Stills Gallery, and the Collective Gallery all received private donations -- in order to reach high spending markets. Those who most fervently objected to encroaching commercial interests were also those who benefit most from these. The autonomy of art rhetoric was thus ultimately pragmatically applied, and compromise was integral to its success. Ideal values were subject to a professional and political pragmatism which allowed for the strategic exchange or partial application of principles in reality, confirming what Georgina Born (1995) referred to as the inconsistent transferability of logic.

### **Art and its autonomy: Popular culture**

Opinions about public tastes have a long lineage within the artistic realm. The institutionalisation of exhibitions in the second half of the eighteenth century changed the identity of artists, and resulted in the emergence of the public as "the new recipient for works of art and the new power in the art world" (Bätschmann, 1997, pp. 9-14). As success at exhibition became the main criterion for success, it was necessary for artists to compete for public approval and the sanction of the press in order to ensure professional survival. Nevertheless, concerns were expressed about the corrupting effects of pandering to mass tastes and the demands of the art market, and artists who succeeded within the democratic terms of this public market were accused of prostituting their art (Bätschmann, 1997). In the nineteenth century direct

<sup>10</sup> Becks beer were regular sponsors of Fruitmarket Gallery exhibitions, for instance, and Habitat sponsored the *BAS5* held at the City Art Centre, Collective Gallery, Dean Gallery, Fruitmarket Gallery, Inverleith House - Royal Botanic Garden, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Stills and Talbot Rice Gallery.

forms of patronage from the European aristocracy, church, and the state largely disappeared, and so too did their entitlement to be the principle audiences for art (Bätschmann, 1997). As the motivation for art was no longer confined to devotional purposes or the interests of private patrons and the consuming public, the artistic realm progressively secured the freedom and space through which to develop the terms of its own conception. The rise of Romanticism further effaced the obligation for artists to serve an identifiable constituency, and instead allowed them to dedicate themselves towards a new conception of the artist as “someone whose production cannot be rationally directed towards any particular audience” (Rosler, 1999, p. 320). “Unconcern with audience”, Rosler argued, “has become a necessary feature of art producers’ professed attitudes and a central element of the ruling ideology of Western art” (Rosler, 1999, p. 320). According to O’Docherty (1999), hostility to the audience is one of the key co-ordinates of modernism. Artists and audiences perform a semiotic ritual of hostility in which audiences suppress extreme anger and artists fulfil expectations by being obtuse and irresponsible in return.

Public patronage in the twentieth century effectively removed the pressure to conform to public tastes, and art became increasingly self engaged, primarily justified according to internally-generated criteria for success. For Scruton (1999), since artists avoided the rectitude given to them by Manet and Baudelaire, art has descended into kitsch built according to internally generated rules of production which have only art and not life as its model.<sup>11</sup> Evidence to support Scruton’s thesis was present in my own work on Edinburgh, particularly in relation to explicitly politically-motivated work. One artist told me for example that “to do political work is an absolute no no, you just can’t do it” (Appendix, 168, C). The self-referentiality of public art was in contrast to commercial art and that culture strongly determined by explicit market demand and audience preference.

<sup>11</sup> Contemporary art does not therefore exist “in its committed and judgement-bearing form”, which also explains why the lack of a ‘real’ function or purpose to this art has been accompanied by what Scruton claims is a crisis in art criticism (Scruton, 1999, p. 84). This perception of critical impotence was reflected within the Edinburgh arts network by artists and critics alike, and curator Matthew Higgs commented on how “Critical dissent ... was for most of the decade [1990s] a deeply unfashionable position to avow ... To be actively critical of British art during the decade was to be associated with either the ‘Emperor’s New Clothes’ brigade led by the *Evening Standard*’s Brian Sewell and *Art Review*’s David Lee or worse, to be ostracised from the party ... The absence of critical engagement and dissent from within is perhaps the most significant legacy of the yBa phenomena” (Higgs, 2000, p. 14).

Having explored artistic autonomy in relation to three sets of differentiation -- material autonomy/genre differentiation, social function/community art, and art/money -- I shall now examine how the category of art was defined through particular exclusions -- namely, its difference to, and distance from, popular cultures. By so doing I also draw on reception as the final element contributing to the autonomy of art (Bürger, 1984). Rather than focussing on a particular case study or event, I attempt to make sense of the cross-section of opinions about popular culture as opposed to art, and consider the ramifications these attitudes have for the construction of the two cultural fields, as well as for perceptions about those who did and did not attend the arts.

Broad attitudes towards popular opinion and public support in Edinburgh were consistent with the wider history of twentieth and early twenty-first century public art outlined above, and despite notable exceptions, art was largely produced with a highly restrictive audience in mind.

So if the first audience for the work is the maker, in the sense that you'll review what you do ... So in a sense my secondary audience is my actual peer group and also a group of people in my head that I carry around, my favourite authors, you know my favourite directors, people like that ... In a sense in my head I am in a dialogue with them all the time. So, taking this idea of what gives you the confidence to make your work, I think most of the confidence comes from a sense of camaraderie, that there are other people working in a similar field to you. I suppose that would be the audience (artist, Appendix, 133, PF).

Artists and gallery managers did not formally define artistic success according to broader audience needs or satisfying an existing market, but by producing work which had its own integrity. The distinction between art and popular culture was one of the primary means through which those involved in the arts understood their own practice as framed in opposition to the non arts public and more commercial cultural pursuits.



Many artists and gallery managers therefore resisted suggestions that they should focus or redirect their work towards the tastes and interests of specific audience groups. One gallery manager said “I feel uncomfortable with the idea of bureaucrats demanding, quote, “vision”, and a high turn out, and bigger audiences” (Appendix, 169, L). Compromise continued to be implied by commercial appeal and transgression beyond the various aesthetic codes of the arts network towards those of the popular imagination. As such, creative authenticity was closely inter-linked with notions of marginality and insulation, at least from certain audiences. Popularity in this sense was seen to be fundamentally inartistic. While discussing these issues, a Glaswegian artist living and working in Edinburgh, explained to me that: “Transmission [Glasgow gallery] about five to eight years ago was really influential, everyone knew about it but you never saw anyone there. If lots of people had gone to the gallery it would have lost its reputation by becoming populist. You have to avoid being populist as this means your work becomes liked by the wrong people” (Appendix, 168, C). For Bourdieu:

In effect, the credit attached to any cultural practice tends to decrease with the numbers and especially the social spread of the audience, because the value of the credit of recognition ensured by consumption decreases when the specific competence recognised in the consumer decreases (and even tends to change sign when it descends below a certain threshold) (Bourdieu, 1996b, p. 115).

This refusal to submit to traditional and commercially-appealing aesthetic codes gave contemporary art its meaning and stature whilst simultaneously ensuring its marginalisation. Notwithstanding the best intentions of some actors, the artistic field was in many ways a fundamentally undemocratic form of communication and professional practice.<sup>12</sup>

In Edinburgh, for example, eighty percent of the arts audience is made up by twenty percent of the population.<sup>13</sup> As such, the arts network operates as a restricted and

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<sup>12</sup> This tendency was not confined to visual art, as a statement from Sir John Drummond testifies, “Theatre should be subsidised to protect it from the market and enable experimentation. Popularity can’t be a judge of value or worth” (Drummond, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Statement by the director of an audience research institution in Edinburgh, January 2001. Social classes AB & C1 make up 78% of those who frequently attend the arts in Edinburgh, and 57% of non-attenders consist of those from social classes C2 and DE (The Audience Business, 1999)

essentially bourgeois institution. This fact is erased by appeals both to the universal value of art and to 'the' audience as an undifferentiated social and cultural group. This does not suggest, however, that artists did not design for particular audiences. Rather, it infers that this process remained hidden in order to maintain the illusion that art was freely conceived and immune to public demands, economic considerations, and the professional ambitions of artists. The dignity of art was, therefore, dependent in large part on the apparent independence of creative intention and action. As one artist put it:

Visitor numbers should not be the benchmark of success for exhibitions, the value of visual art cannot be measured in these terms. Art should not be made for audiences, though often they mediate and relate to human experiences and site contexts vary. Audiences are not [a] homogeneous mass. This is a culture hostile to visual art. There are a host of issues that need addressing and artists should not be expected to be social workers, to deal with all the ills of society, though inevitably social conditions and political issues are referenced and mediated (Appendix, 133, PF).

The non-professional, non-buying, non-specialist public were effectively rendered invisible within the management, funding, formulation and production and distribution of art works. In the SAC's Corporate Plan 1997 - 2001, the following "key players in the arts within Scotland" were named; local authorities, local enterprise companies, the business and commercial sector, tourism agencies, the BBC and other broadcasting bodies, educational institutions, artists and arts organisations (SAC, OP, 1997, p. 4). Audiences did not figure. Further, members of the public were not represented either on SAC art form committees or in any other capacity within the organisation. As one artist admitted, "I guess people will come into shows like this and look around and go this is crap, but it isn't, it's just that they don't know what art is... I totally forget other people's experiences of art because I'm an artist and I feel totally comfortable looking at art in a gallery" (artist, Appendix, 170, PF). Further, the public's involvement was generally perceived to impede the flow of creative impulses, restricting the essential freedom of the artistic imagination. This notion of unmediated practice also applied to the way art works were received. Much debate surrounded the use of interpretation materials. Concern evolved around whether explanation closed down the meaning of art works and obstructed audiences'

reception of them: “we seem to be in a state now of, um, dismissing all forms of interpretation as being, as interfering [with] the experience of the work and the viewer” (lecturer, curator & writer, Appendix, 170, GT). This linking of ‘real’ art to unfettered creative and operational freedom inhibited the potential for art to become either more commercially viable or socially engaged, and my work shows it consequently became a key point of tension between the art world and government in relation to audience development development (see chapter five).

Despite increased aesthetic integration between cultural fields, the art world’s relationship with popular culture and its audiences appears to be highly ambiguous, riven by internal differences of opinion and latent assumptions about the deficiency of mass cultural phenomena and its audiences: “Art galleries are not stuffy. People are discovering there is real as opposed to TV experience, that there is another life as opposed to quite honestly the atrophying experience [of television]” (gallery manager, Appendix, 117, M). Hostility to popular aesthetics was frequently opined to me in terms of the threat of a brute cultural invasion, where visual art, born of an educated delicate sensibility, was vulnerable to the excesses of commercial tastes. In the words of one gallery director: “[We] are facing times where there is a possibility of a take-over, the disneyfication, where the arts are moving into kitsch. ... is this related to the fact that the arts aren’t taken seriously enough in the education process?” (gallery manager, Appendix, 117, M).

In this instance, creative authenticity was seen to lie on the side of visual art rather than televisual culture, which was viewed as an aberration of the creative imagination (see also Bragg, 2001). In a consultation meeting, one arts manager declared that “TV is passive and [in] the theatre people are actively engaged”, implying a uniformity of content and value within both genres, as well as a hierarchical disparity between them (Appendix, 7, CE). Further, the arts audience was projected as critically aware and actively involved, the TV audience as passive, lumpen and degenerate. Sport was also depicted as the antithesis of all that art stood for, the negative shadow of all that was uplifting and life affirming about artistic endeavour: “Every place needs to be sung about, written about, otherwise it doesn’t exist. It’s about whether it affects the imagination. This is the difference between art and sport, how we are feeding the

imagination of the nation. Sports doesn't do this" (arts manager, Appendix, 117, M). Sport and television were thus established as antagonistic to the arts, operating as compelling sources of distraction for a wayward public unable to rise to its full creative potential, or to exercise finer cultural sensibilities.

That embodied nature of cultural capital noted by Bourdieu in chapter one was apparent in my research through repeated reference to the non arts public in visceral terms, as having decadent and narcissistic cultural and culinary tastes, greedily consuming fatty processed food whilst indulging in lazy mind-numbing pastimes. The following remarks were made by various arts professionals and voluntary sector workers at a consultation event.

- delegate 1. If [you] can eat crisps and stuff your faces in the theatre like [you] can do in the cinema, then people might make the effort to go there.
- delegate 2. Cinema is easier than the theatre.
- delegate 3. There needs [to be] a campaign to show there's a healthy diet of the arts in the same way there's a campaign for healthy eating. People eat expensive processed food rather than healthy cheap food.
- delegate 4. I agree, people eat ...
- delegate 5. It's easier to eat chips and pies than turn on the TV to watch Eastenders rather than go to the theatre (Appendix, 57, CE).

In part condemned for an over-indulgent pursuit of gratification within this exchange, popular audiences are seen to forsake constructive life-enhancing activities for a weak and uncontrolled appetite for pleasure (Huysman, 1988). What audiences consume and how they express themselves are conflated and interchanged, working in combination to define who they were and where they fit into an implied cultural hierarchy. The non arts audience is presented as impaired in mind and body, blindly consuming the harmful products of a commercial market which encourages short-term indulgence over the more rewarding opportunities offered by the arts.

If "there is no way out of the game of culture", we are all enclosed within an aesthetic framework to which there is no outside (Bourdieu, 1996a, p. 12). Bourdieu qualified the apparent universality of this, however, by arguing that the degree of

saturation is not equal for all people, and that the capacity for objectification and critical distance is highly class specific. He claimed that the *popular taste* of the working classes is less capable of objectification. Bourdieu also implied that bourgeois audiences appreciate form while popular audiences take refuge in function. This assertion between the working classes and more “naturalised” and spontaneous aesthetic practices mirrors anthropological assertions about pre-modern people’s apparent inability to separate subject from object and sign from thing (Latour, 1993). Aspects of this argument were reflected in Edinburgh through the common assumption (within contemporary and community art) that working-class cultures were devoid of artistic ambition or pretension.

The urge to redress the uneven distribution of creativity across social classes was expressed as an impulse to get popular audiences actively and collectively involved in producing art. The less well-off were expected to *do* art in an authentic, self improving, and participatory manner. The better off were expected to *view* art in a distant and thoughtful way. It was rare, for instance, to come across arts appreciation classes within a community arts setting. Involvement was strongly associated with physical rather than intellectual participation, reanimating the slothful body, but not substantially engaging with the critical capacities of popular audiences.

Contemporary artists made a hierarchical distinction between physically and emotionally engaging culture and art as a determinedly detached and unmediated professional entity. Objectification and the ability to reflect consciously on one’s own practices was therefore associated with a higher autonomous state of being, and with more valid cultural processes.

This basic distinction, all too common among those I researched, was built up through an essentially Kantian separation of sensory gratification from disinterested contemplation, facile expression from the interests of reason, profane from sacred culture, commercial from visual art, and ultimately, “them” from “us”. Artistic autonomy was not, therefore, simply based upon the aesthetic form, substance, and material boundaries of the art object itself, but also on the cultural capital of those engaged with it, and most specifically, the comparative value of their assets in relation to others. Association with the arts was largely seen to provide participants



with moral as well as cultural authority. As such, taste worked to consolidate a moral economy as well as particular cultural preferences. Art was not simply valued for what it was, but for who produced it and the type of people it subsequently yielded. Despite rhetorical assumptions about the universal value of the arts, aesthetic authority was not neutral but deeply implicated within a framework of economic, moral and social sanction and exclusion.

To a large extent, therefore, artistic integrity was premised on social and professional exclusivity which, in combination with discourses of aesthetic authority, maintained the elevated position of minority artistic concerns above the preferences of wider public cultures. Visual art was broadly projected as being cultured, real, authentic, intellectually committed, and emotionally sophisticated. As Miller observed, “These global approaches almost always move from an attack on contemporary material culture as trivial and inauthentic to an implied (though rarely explicitly) denigration of the mass of the population whose culture this is” (Miller, 1994, p. 16). Aesthetic, economic and cultural stratification thus collided, ensuring the marginalisation of some and the inclusion of others and enabling sections of the art world to dismiss other forms of creativity and those engaged with them as being artless. The autonomous category ‘art’ was thus maintained through the sophisticated construction of aggressive boundaries between itself and popular culture and its audiences.

Debates about increasing the appeal of art to wider audiences were invariably coupled with concerns about ‘debasing’ the product. The most prominent exponent of this view was John Tusa (1999) (managing director of London’s Barbican Centre) who established an alternative arts council in protest against the philistinism of the Arts Council of England (Appendix, 94, S). Despite the rhetoric of social inclusion projected within arts policy documents (see chapter five), funding criteria/agreements, and in relation to galleries themselves, there was an underlying fear that granting too much power to the masses would result in the erosion of ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual standards (McQuail, 1997). The unmediated presence of the uninitiated would corrupt the purity of the artistic ideal. The desire to protect the autonomy of art was driven by a fear of the non-attender and the

consequences their involvement implied. The capacity for judgement and critical engagement was thus selectively allocated to different audiences, and many artists and gallery managers distrusted the public's ability to make informed aesthetic judgements:

I'd like to end by saying the hostility to visual artists at this time is corrosive and indicative of a deeper problem where the price of everything and the value of nothing is known. And as for audience driven policies, as has been observed elsewhere, in the past, the most popular form of public spectacle was public hanging [laughter and some clapping] (artist, Appendix, 133, PF).

The relative vulnerability and unpopularity of art was therefore utilised to justify continued subsidy and protection from gauche and unrestrained mass tastes. This "cultural protectionist discourse" (Owens, 1997, p. 19-21) holds that art requires protection from the public, but also by implication, that the public required protection from their own baser instincts. In the words of a senior civil servant, "The problem is more with people's perception of art than with the type of art which is offered. People's perception of it is the problem, [it] isn't that there isn't the right type of art in the right areas".<sup>14</sup>

Barnett usefully highlights the vulnerabilities entailed within the modern view of culture as divided, illustrating how "the externality [other side] against which culture is defined is always likely to be consumed by culture, and the hierarchically subordinate element is thus always open to transformation by the superordinate term" (Barnett, 2001, p. 13). Although not subordinate, the prevalent view of artistic integrity was dependent on this ability to remain separate, and therefore protected, from public tastes. As Buchloch observed:

The contrivance of aura is crucial for these works in order that they fulfil their function as the luxury products of a fictitious high culture. In the tangibility of the auratic, figured through crafted surface textures, aura and commodity coalesce. Only such synthetic uniqueness can satisfy the contempt that bourgeois character holds for the 'vulgarity' of social existence; and only this aura can generate 'aesthetic pleasure' in the narcissistic character disorder

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<sup>14</sup> 'Edinburgh Arts for Social Inclusion' interview, Scottish Executive, Victoria Quay, 21 May 2001.

that results from this contempt (Buchloch, 1997, p. 237).

Viewed in this way, the most radical challenge to the autonomous status of art was represented by market forces and the pressure to account for popular tastes against the transcendent terms of the artist intellectual. This explains why it was considered necessary carefully to police the manner in which interactions between the contemporary and popular fields occurred.

The autonomy of art survived on the covert assumption that involvement with art ennobled its advocates, and enabled society as a whole to escape its baser aspects. Bourdieu and Darbel argue that the legitimated hegemony derives “the justification for their monopoly of the instruments of appropriation of cultural goods from an essentialist representation of the division of their society into barbarians and civilized people” (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, p.179). By mobilising an oppositional framework, culture is projected as antithetical to nature, civilisation, or anarchy, and it is also “divided hierarchically, into high and low, elite and mass” (Barnett, 2001, p. 13). The cultural other is primarily presented as somehow lacking, a contention which echoes Bennett’s work on the normalising effects of the expansive view of culture (see chapter one). Bourdieu and Darbel similarly suggest that “the love of art is the clear mark of the chosen”, and it is the function of culture to separate “those who are touched by it from those who have not received this grace” (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, p.179). The ritual aestheticism of art serves not only to distance it from everyday culture, but also “as reminders that the transition from the profane to the sacred world implies, as Durkheim says, ‘a veritable metamorphosis’, a radical transformation of the mind ... which is quite impossible, unless the profane is to lose its specific characteristics and become sacred” (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, pp. 179-180). Public involvement in art could thus only be contemplated when accompanied by an appropriate education, a contention which echoes discussions about culture as “a normative grid”, a reformers science, and “a place of inculcation” (Bennett, 1998, p. 100; Weil, 1998, p. 27). The national cultural strategy (Scottish Executive, AP, 2000), for instance, placed strong emphasis on arts education in schools as a means through which to inculcate potential non-attenders and shape the audiences of the future. A key recommendation was for cultural co-ordinators in schools (Scottish

Executive, AP, 2000, p. 41). The public were expected to pay for art but they were not expected to take part on their own terms. As one artist said, “is it important people are converted?” (Appendix, 20, IN).

Artist and writer John Beagles pointed out that Glasgow was “ravaged” by a “deep schism between its art intelligentsia and the public”, which curators responded to by staging “catch all theme show[s]” in order to assimilate populist clothing when they were accused of elitism (Beagles, 1997, pp. 12-13). Appropriating popular referents, and/or undertaking community arts work did not necessarily represent a shift in the content or significance of contemporary art. Rather it was utilised as a means through which to enlighten others about the unique character of this aesthetic, and move them towards this normative position, or as the same artist said, an “enlightened sensibility” (Appendix, 67, IN). Given this, the autonomous character of the work remained essentially fixed, discretely protected from democratic and epistemological imperatives.

Just as the assumed cultures of non arts publics were simultaneously reviled and celebrated, artists from working-class backgrounds had a precarious status within the Edinburgh arts network. A Glaswegian artist told me that:

I feel discriminated against in Edinburgh because of my accent, and because I’m a working class man from the West coast .... We all know art is exclusive, we just don’t talk about it. It pretends to be classless and democratic and politically correct. Art is supposed to be like club cultures, classless and with everyone on the same level, all sharing. But in reality its not like that... It isn’t equal (Appendix, 168, C).

The cultural othering intrinsic to the autonomy of art ideal operated as an internal category, dividing valid from invalid artists.

Artistic autonomy seems also to be closely related to the notion of aesthetic diversity. It was widely assumed, for instance, that a rich diversity of public art lay in positive juxtaposition to a homogeneity of commercial tastes. Non arts audiences - working-class, ethnic, and disabled communities, the young and disadvantaged



within government and funding rhetoric -- were generically identified, and targeted interchangeably as the focus for liberal forms of cultural engagement designed to deliver them into closer contact with 'valid' and rewarding cultural practices. Notwithstanding basic assumptions about artistic diversity, artists and gallery managers variously accused each other of conforming to well-established aesthetic orthodoxies (see chapter three). Accusations of uniformity thus existed in relation to those within the arts network as well as in relation to those cultural forms and audiences existing 'external' to it:<sup>15</sup>

democracy is insulted by dumbing down, the true nature of democracy is a kind of poly headed structure you know in a sense that's what I'm driving at, and you've got this over centralisation of systems [funding] which won't allow diversity, it won't allow diversity of public money. Its got its driven heritage trail and that eats up most of the money (Appendix, 81, PF).

The aesthetic diversity principle was therefore strategically played to discredit rival arts/cultural factions, while also functioning as a unifying principle through which the entire art world could demand protection. In turn, funding agencies were ensnared by the desire to nurture cultural 'diversity' and protect art from an apparently banal market which threatened its abundance, whilst also upholding the responsibility to make art more democratically accountable. A COSLA representative stated that, "Some sectors [i.e. popular and commercial enterprises] can take care of themselves. Perhaps our targets are the subsidised sector where the arts are too fragile to survive. [We] can't see popular as success. [We] have to face up to this territory and why subsidy is given" (Appendix, 57, CE). The SAC acutely embodied this counter pressure to increase audiences and to fund art for its own sake. When accused of privileging inappropriate evaluation mechanisms above artistic accomplishments, the director of the visual arts department, SAC, protested that: "we are asked to give performance indicators but that doesn't mean to say we're going to take money away

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<sup>15</sup> Massow claimed that 'concept art' in Britain has become "an official art" endorsed by Downing Street, sponsored by business, and selected by a cartel of cultural tsars including Nicholas Serota and Charles Saatchi (Massow, 2002: 11-12). "The arts establishment ... is terrifyingly powerful and, like all centres of power, it is not friend to heterodoxy", it derides those who speak out against it as "past it", and talented young artists are "forced to ditch their talent and reinvent themselves as creators of video installations, or a machine that produces foam in the middle of a room, in order to be recognised as contemporary artists.... Thousands of young artists wait in the wings to see whether the taste arbiters will relinquish their exclusive fascination with concept art. It's a crime" (Massow, 2002, pp. 11-12).



from someone who only got 50 people through the door, I mean Transmission is a good example of an organisation that my department supports, and it doesn't support it on the basis of bringing audiences through the door at all" (arts officer Appendix, 133, PF).

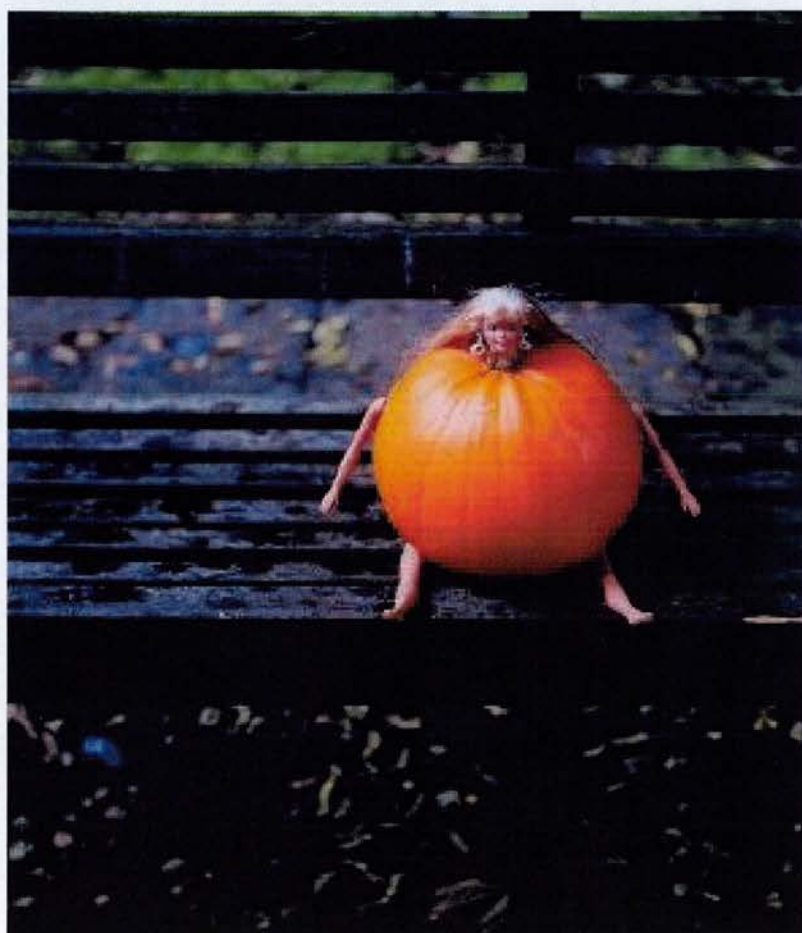
Attitudes towards 'the' popular were not, therefore, consistent across the arts network. Popular culture and its audiences were both embraced and resisted by government, funding agencies and artists/gallery managers. They were at once a compelling source of fascination and abhorrence. The SAC launched its *contemporary popular music* policy in March 2001, stating that it "recognises contemporary popular music as part of the spectrum of music as an art form", and that "attention to the status and needs of contemporary music has increased in recent years with ... our new Parliament, the Scottish Executive and local authorities" (SACa, AP, 2001, pp. 3-4). Alan Wilson, culture minister announced "It is about widening the scope of the arts council's remit" (Woodcock, 2001). *The Scotsman* decried the £100,000 spending "as derisory and an act of tokenism in the wake of the £5 million set aside for the beleaguered Scottish Opera" (Woodcock, 2001). Similarly, the director of a popular music festival exclaimed, "The [SAC] is supporting rock thirty years too late. It makes me laugh. All the art forms which are popular are sneered at " (Appendix, 17, M). The integration of popular tastes into fine art aesthetics materialised as different degrees of concentration or resistance, and government pressure to popularise art, alongside the internally-driven interest of some artists in popular culture further animated exchanges between those in favour of distance form, or integration with, mass cultures.

For Roberts (1996), younger artists feel themselves to be part of a common popular culture and do not make a hierarchical distinction between art's pleasures and other pleasures. To some extent, my research confirmed this distinction, and for some emergent artists mass culture has become an aesthetic resource. Incorporation was, however, largely conducted within tightly confined aesthetic parameters which tended to renew rather than to challenge the cultural authority of the art world. Commercial tastes were extracted from their original context, assigned different meanings, and voraciously appropriated by galleries such as the Collective, Stills and

(to a lesser extent) the Fruitmarket which were eager to demonstrate their own progressiveness. The popular was thus transformed in order to become acceptable as art -- the inverse of Bourdieu's point above about how the 'art' is destroyed through inappropriate popularity -- while aesthetic authenticity and the category of art itself remained essentially dependent on detachment from, rather than resonance with, non arts cultures. Developments in art thus mirrored the wider social and political means through which difference has become commodified by establishment interests. The appropriation of popular culture is similar in this regard to the appropriation of radical practice outlined in chapter one.

David Shrigley's (1998) work in the *BAS5*, is illustrative of a particularly conspicuous engagement with popular forms.

Figure 17: *Pumpkin*, David Shrigley (1998)



For Shrigley:

A lot of people don't see me as a contemporary artist or fine artist, a lot of people see my work as cartoons out with the fine art world, which I'm happy about. I want it to be accessible and I like to make work which doesn't rely on any knowledge of art history and art theory, but which is accessible to many people... What I meant by talking about it being accessible is that I don't necessarily want my work to be seen as art work and so the point I was trying to make is pertinent to seeing my public art works in toilets and the parks and things, and it not really being art work as such in the terms of fine art (Appendix, 170, GT).

Shrigley has consciously distanced himself from what he terms the 'contemporary' and 'fine art' nexus by appropriating popular referents, breaking out of the gallery space, and juxtaposing his work within the spaces of the everyday. He knowingly plays with the category of art's reliance on cultural, spatial and aesthetic autonomy, and eschews artistic conventions and theory in an attempt to reposition his work outside this hierarchical category. As such, his work is illustrative of a conflict common among many emergent artists: between respecting the different internal aesthetic interests of the art world and/or pursuing the cultural preferences of the wider publics of which they see themselves as a part.

These artists also felt ambiguous about their professional identity as artists, shunning the claim to exceptionality this implied. This is made clear from a second reading of the comment made by the director of an artist-run collective:

The modernist debate is dead and most artists know that. [It] is about how they locate themselves, [they] don't see themselves as isolated in the garret as producing some awe inspiring thing. [They] don't see themselves as "I'm an artist and that's what I do", but as other things, i.e. [I] work in Safeways, [I'm a] mother, etc." (gallery director, Appendix, 1, M).

Despite such reservations the maintenance of the categorical distinctiveness of art continued to be perpetuated through reference to the special status of artists themselves as the unpredictable, inspired, confused, and martyred capillary through which creativity flows. As one curator explained "we talk about artists as if they're



different, a breed apart from you or me” (Appendix, 128, M). Although intending to undermine the hierarchical sublimation of both art and artist, in the end this was the rudimentary foundation upon which public subsidy was accorded. An abiding belief in the artist as visionary genius, propped up by a continued investment in the auratic object provided the arts network with its most compelling argument for the investment in individual talent regardless of cost effectiveness, commercial success, or popular appeal.<sup>16</sup> As long as the category of art is defined through its autonomy, artists and gallery managers are trapped, as they cannot declare compatibility with other creative professionals while also claiming special subsidy for their activities. The autonomy of art relies upon an elevated regard for artists themselves, and, therefore, for the product of their labours.

When accompanied by the argument that many of our most valued artists were not popular in their own time (Bätschmann, 1997), minority artistic pursuits were further justified as being of general social benefit in the long term:

There is not and has never been any direct correlation between popular success and enduring significance in any of the arts. History is littered with reputations that blossomed on a wave of popularity and then vanished. Conversely, great artists have rarely achieved instant popularity. How could they when they are shaping taste? It takes a generation for the public to catch up (Macmillan, 1999).<sup>17</sup>

Artistic judgement, as facilitated by artists, critics, managers, and curators, thus hovered through time, anticipating what could not possibly be appreciated by the uninitiated in the present: “What we see now is what people will know in twenty

<sup>16</sup> Despite supporting “the digitisation of collections” in Scotland, for instance, the NGoS stated that “In real works of art there is, of course, a volume, a density, a surface finish, and an essential aura that no amount of technology will ever reproduce ... there is no substitute for the real thing [NGoS emphasis]” (NGoS, GD, 1999, pp. 1-4). Consistent with Benjamin (1970), digitally reproduced paintings were regarded as providing a secondary experience, a shadow or fake copy of the original, the value of which was defined according to its “aura”. The concept of aura, with its sentimental attachment to the actual strokes of the painters brush, has powerful spatial repercussions by restricting the ‘proper’ access to and appreciation of the object to those able to directly view the original rather than a reproduction. Investment in the auratic significance of art perpetuated the superior aesthetic value of painting over other reproducible media, and thus consolidates the NGoS’ status as a unique keeper of “real works of art” (NGoS, GD, 1999, pp. 1-4). Benjamin similarly exposes the link between the metaphorical qualities of art and powerful interests, arguing that the democratic potential of reproduced objects could be realised by breaking this link between ‘aura’ and power.

<sup>17</sup> Macmillan’s (1999) article damns Vettriano’s work claiming it is formulaic, commercially driven and lacking in emotional quality. It also questions collective critical capacities and consequently popular tastes.

years time. We have that creative ability” (artist, Appendix, 102, C). Although rooted in the present, “art exists in a kind of eternity of display”, and by “appearing out of time, or beyond time, implies a claim that the work already belongs to posterity - that is it is an assurance of good investment” (McEvelley, 1999, p. 7). This capacity to push boundaries -- categorical, aesthetic, social, material -- and travel through time was central to the credibility of art and artists in the present. Even when challenging the material presence of art, stretching its spatial territory, and dissolving its cultural distinctiveness, the autonomous category was predicated on its capacity to rise above the everyday. As the material presence of art became more ephemeral, however, so the vulnerability of the category increased. Debates about the material and disciplinary basis of art, its social function, the involvement of non art publics, and the status of artists themselves (are they social workers, educators, creative industry professionals?), did create instability, but conversely, these disputes also continually re-vitalised the autonomous status of the artistic realm.

## **Summary and conclusions**

Janet Wolff avowed that in order to understand the nature of art, we need to demystify the ideas of our age which maintain its autonomy and universal quality (Wolff, 1993). Only by exposing the social and historical processes involved in art making, problematising the belief that art is somehow above history and social divisions and prejudices, and laying bare the hidden meanings of particular interested groups within art work, can we illustrate how extra-aesthetic elements intrude into what purport to be ‘purely’ aesthetic judgements, or appreciate art with reference to social divisions and their economic bases (Wolff, 1993). To this end, I have examined the veracity of the notion of artistic autonomy in Edinburgh, and questioned the degree to which contemporary art actually maintained material, conceptual and operational independence.

In Edinburgh, increased cross fertilisation between contemporary and commercial art, and the public and private art market, along with technological advancements, and the inquisitiveness and anti institutional pretensions of contemporary artists, has made idealised notions of art as an island of purity illusory. In addition to “barriers



between art forms dissolving” (arts officer, Appendix, 139, PF), the distinction between contemporary and popular culture also lost its persuasiveness in creative and technical terms. The aesthetic and institutional parameters of visual art has become progressively more contested as a result of these and other challenges. Notwithstanding this, aesthetic fluidity itself became a mark of distinction, and the autonomous category of art maintained its distinctiveness by expanding and evolving to encompass these challenges to its professional status. While certain transgressive acts acquired their own cultural currency, other expressions of difference (such as the commercialism of Vettriano's work) guaranteed exclusion from the network.

Although still prevalent and of critical importance, the commitment to art as a detached entity was inevitably compromised through practical application. Artistic production was so deeply embedded within a broad network of influences that I have debated whether it retained any existence beyond or outwith these contexts. The autonomy discourse was therefore strategically adapted and deployed as a way of thinking and talking about art, a rhetorical ideal which lacked any empirical accuracy. This talk was significant, however, as it was embedded in praxis and shaped the conventions and aspirations of the field. The values associated with autonomy, such as creative freedom, aesthetic objectivity, individuality, and professional and operational independence, continued to be the principles through which art was judged and named as art. Despite its integrated character, the art world remained committed (albeit reluctantly in some instances, and often in contradictory ways) to its autonomous status. Indeed, despite notable attempts to challenge the aesthetic, and institutional integrity of the profession, the category of art merely evolved to absorb the terms of its own destruction. The accumulation of secondary oppositions created internal differentiation without actually threatening the stability of the autonomy discourse.

This is not to suggest that the ‘realities’ of the network negate an ‘unreality’ of discourses, rather, notions of artistic autonomy function as aspirational ideals which clearly affect the network and have tangible material consequences. Discourses are, therefore, a real part of the network. Further, I have argued that contemporary art is self-conscious and indulges in aesthetic play and counter-play as part of a knowing

engagement with itself. Artists do not, therefore, suffer from false consciousness but aspire towards a freedom of opportunity which they recognise is precarious. The autonomy of art discourse is a professional necessity, and artists strive to maintain its currency with funding agents while resisting factors which threaten its development.

Consistent with the previous chapter, the identity and integrity of many contemporary artists seems to be foundered on the construction and destruction of the aesthetic boundaries between themselves and their antithetical other. I have again highlighted how the network is characterised by conflict within its own parameters: between professional and amateur practice and between itself and other art forms. These central lines of dispute were extended, however, to account for the ways in which the hierarchical status of art related to the assumptions about the cultures of non-arts audiences. Rather than bearing much similarity to the diverse realities of people's lives, I have argued that constructs of popular audiences, as well as of art and non art, were variously manufactured in relation to changing institutional and professional interests (Harvey, 1998). By exposing the construction of art as autonomous, I indicate how cultural authority was legitimised through association with different bodies of people. The elevation of art into a separate social and aesthetic category was a political act which preserved the art world in its existing manifestations whilst simultaneously exercising exclusions upon those not involved in its production and reception.

Artistic autonomy does not occur naturally or spontaneously. It is contrived and replicated within powerful structures which at once deny the ways in which worldly considerations actually shaped the production of art, while also insisting on the integrity of the artistic object beyond basic material, functional, social, class, and (increasingly) ideological restrictions. The autonomous status of art within the public sector was secured through discursive authority rather than through substantive evidence. It is a category of understanding which enables the public art world to maintain its elevated status above mundane social and economic considerations, apparently separate, and forever vulnerable to hostile influences. This was the contradictoriness of the autonomy of art category, its apartness was a product of

history, a carefully orchestrated illusion (Bürger, 1984).

## Extending the social function of art

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The document [Scotland's National Cultural Strategy] has little to say about artists themselves ... The authors of the document seemed less interested in the quality of culture than in justifying it as a "social good," which indeed it is, though first it is an individual delight (Massie, 2000, p. 62).

I think there is a growing perception that we have to look at what art can do for society and not what society can do for art (director, SAC, Appendix, 94, S).

This chapter explores the degree to which political priorities, as expressed through public arts policies and funding mechanisms, challenge the autonomous status of the artistic profession. I examine the counter position to the autonomy of art discourse upheld by government which sees art as having a direct economic, educational and social role which delivers tangible outcomes. This enquiry involves looking at joined-up policy making and the manner in which this multiplies expectations surrounding art. While the previous chapter focused on aesthetic, cultural and material autonomy, here I attend to the political and strategic context, and explore the extent to which government influences restrict the actions of funding bodies and arts organisations, potentially dissolving their operational autonomy and reducing the space for alternative cultural ideals. I examine whether pressure from this utilitarian agenda, as asserted through funding criteria and arts policies, has led to the erosion of the arms-length principle and politicised the artistic field. This, I argue, would have serious implications for the arts profession as an autonomous entity. I subsequently focus on three key aspects of the 'art as social' discourse, art as economic, educational and socially inclusive, exploring how this notion of art as a social good attained

generalised acceptance and how these ideas shape funding agencies' expectations. I draw on research derived from assessment of arts policies and strategies within government and local government as well as material gathered through meetings, conversations, and observation with arts officers.

### **Ideology-free government**

David Marquand suggests that Tony Blair's dream of "a united and homogeneous people, undifferentiated by class or locality", had fuelled his "disdain for party" politics and for the differences of ideology which have sustained these (Marquand, 2000, p. 25). The Labour party's political vision was inclusive, designed to cut across traditional class interests and to transcend political divides and ideology itself. Distancing itself from the welfare politics of old Labour, the new government attempted to forge a path between social democratic principles, individualism and market economics. This agenda mirrored the ongoing dialogue between aristocratic, welfare and neo-liberal forms of arts patronage. New Labour's politics of common sense had implications for the construction of an amorphous political arena which favoured broad-based coalitions across parties and departments, rather than distinctive lines of opposition between them. Justified in terms of efficiency, improved communication and the effective pooling of resources, partnership working or 'joined-up government' as it was known, was part of a broader desire to break down departmental or institutional boundaries and establish a shared commitment to (apparently) ideologically neutral practices. During the Scottish parliamentary election campaign for instance, there was a remarkable coincidence of party political opinion (Macmillan, 1999) about the development of the arts. At a public meeting of prospective MSPs, there was open support for a "cross party consensus" on this issue (Susan Deacon, Scottish New Labour, Appendix, 108). In a meeting organised by the National Artists Association, an artist also observed that "[you] can't tell the difference between the political parties' positions" (Appendix, 117).

Since coming into office Labour ushered in an era of non-aligned cultural politics, draining explicit ideological commitments from discussions about the social role of the arts, and thus naturalising its own political ideals. The commitment to greater access



and social inclusion did, for instance, loosen links with the class politics of poverty and inequality, and redistribution was reframed within less confrontational notions of social inclusion, ‘opportunity for all’ (Walker, 2002) and quality of life. The CEC Equalities Committee was replaced by a Social Inclusion Committee, for instance. Notions of the ‘community’, and of art fulfilling an essential social service were constructed as apparently neutral political categories and used interchangeably by politicians across political divides. The movement towards ‘third way’ politics “originally described by the American Democrats as a ‘new progressivism’” (Giddens, 2000, p. 2) was designed to stifle ideological controversy between “a highly statist brand of social democracy’ and right-wing, free-market philosophy (neoliberalism)” (Tony Blair, in Giddens, 2000, p. 3; see also Williams, 1993). ‘Third way’ principles depoliticised government, in part by embracing a broader coalition of political, professional and public interests. Government ideals were presented as existing beyond the frontiers of party politics, class or other vested interest. In turn, cultural policy assumed a generic non-party political aura, and in general opposition parties seemed to share the same cultural priorities as the Labour party (Everitt, 1997, p. 7). This neutering of the adversarial political model into the bland language of consensus politics was accompanied by increasingly intrusive forms of government intervention into arts funding. A neutrality of artistic purpose was thus being assumed at precisely the point at which the use of art as a social tool was becoming increasingly politicised. Primarily justified on the basis of the need for accountability and Best Value (see chapter six), apparently neutral government interventions began significantly to alter both the definition and management of the arts in Britain.

### **Joined-up thinking: Integrating art into wider development paradigms**

In principle the government was committed to integrating cultural provision more effectively into its broader strategic programme. Mark Fisher MP, then Minister for the Arts, wrote that, “The Prime Minister believes passionately that the arts and culture have for too long remained outside the mainstream - just an optional extra - and that their huge potential has gone unrecognised by government. Above all else, this is what we in the Labour Party aim to change” (Fisher, 1997, p. 1). To this end

the DCMS underlined the contribution culture and creativity made towards national life, bringing pleasure, imagination and broadening our horizons. More pertinently, Chris Smith championed the notion of a cultural economy, arguing that “there is another justification for creativity, and a reason for cherishing it: the whole creative sector is a growing part of the economy” (Smith, 1998, p. 2). By accentuating the contribution the arts made to core economic and political objectives such as employment, social inclusion, enterprise and education, the DCMS attempted to promote its own status in relation to other government departments by arguing that culture was integral to government operations on a number of different levels. Emphasising the commonality between services became a means through which to reduce the marginalisation of cultural issues within political discourse. Strategic synchronicity also reduced the obvious differences between art and more ‘essential’ public services, thus making art more politically palatable.

Local government reorganisation in 1996, along with progressive cuts in local government spending through the Thatcher, Major, and Blair governments, compelled local authorities to reassess their service priorities and practices in order to accommodate more stringent spending limits. Within the context of wider adjustments to local authority organisation, this made it necessary “to recognise [that] in terms of local authority grants, the arts aren’t top of the list” (Appendix, 11, M). *The Labour Group Motion*, CEC, proposed a reduction of £105,000 to the Heritage and Arts Division budget for 1999/2000 (CEC, GD, 1999c). Although a sum less than in previous years ongoing financial pressure precipitated intense and competitive discussions within individual councils about the value and status of different departments and services. Council recreation departments had to defend themselves in relation to these broad trends in public sector finance, as well as the changing national agenda for the arts, and internal corporate priorities. The competition for cultural resources was therefore conducted on a national and local government level, with arts budgets in both instances pitched against more politically acceptable service priorities such as education, housing and social welfare. Although decision making within the annual spending round at CEC had always been framed within a hierarchy of values attached to the different public services, these priorities were thrown into sharp relief at times of financial hardship. In following sections I

examine how funding agencies were obliged to develop increasingly sophisticated means through which to justify existing arts budgets in relation to other service priorities.

In 1998 the Scottish Council Foundation (Scottish Council Foundation, GD, 1998) published “a systematic analysis of the factors essential to improving quality of life and health in Scotland”, but the arts received no mention (Christie, 1999, p. 6). At a conference a year later COSLA’s cultural spokesperson warned that key Scottish Executive documents -- such as *Targeting Excellence: Modernising Scotland’s Schools* (Scottish Office white paper, 1999), which laid down the Labour party agenda for education in Scotland -- did “not mention the arts” (Appendix, 103, CP). Significantly, this lack of presence within the broader public policy framework endangered the profile, authority, and power of the arts in relation to other public services. The spokesperson argued that “If you are on message the money will follow”. Money and power were clearly dependent upon presence and space within the network, secured through discursive means. COSLA stressed the need for arts organisations actively to respond to emerging political priorities by integrating these principles into their work. The ‘something for something’ ethos emanating from government, and subsequently local government, galvanised many arts organisations into adopting the new public policy agendas.

In the light of stringent public finances the strong commitment to accountability and measuring social benefits, and general political indifference to the arts, SAC and CEC arts officers also deduced that survival in the arts would most effectively be secured by firmly embedding activities within the broader strategic infrastructure. The SAC hired Ian Christie, deputy director of the New Labour think tank Demos, to address how changing cultural, demographic, labour market, employment, and income factors would affect the arts in future (Christie, 1999, and Miller, 1999) (Appendix, 94, S). Outlining the case for pursuing “‘joined-up’ policies for social and economic regeneration”, Christie concluded that:

‘The arts’ cannot afford to see itself as a policy area separate from these agendas. It cannot compete as a public spending priority ... Instead we might

try a new way of thinking: ask not what the state can do for the arts -- ask what the arts can do for the quality of holistic, 'joined-up' programmes for community regeneration, lifelong learning and social inclusion (Christie, 1999, p. 6).

The critical visual arts journal, *Variant*, published a response to Christie's seminar:

Many things are done in an underhand and unaccountable way in the arts. Not just decision making, but the political ideologies which are enforced upon it. ... Reality fabrication had also been the purpose of Christie's talk, "A New Agenda for the Arts" which was also slyly pushed around the SAC by 'colleagues' who followed the lead and felt the need to be seen to be urging others towards Christie's big idea. This is the brainless fraud that there is no need to form an arts policy distinct from that dictated by London. Christie even offers the golden promise that if "autonomous Scotland" were to follow the government line we would be the "envy and fascination" of the rest of the country... We are all welcome to "join up" (Clark, 2001a, p. 3).

Driven by a belief that "Scottish culture is self determined here in Scotland and it will always seek freedom", Clark was objecting to the perceived conspiracy between SAC officers and the "diseased mentality" of Christie, a Downing Street 'policy entrepreneur'" (Clark, 2001a, p. 6). Joined-up thinking, as advocated by government, was seen to threaten the integrity of art generally and Scottish art in particular. Quoting Christie, Clark remarked that: "the "nature of the artistic experience on offer" is inconsequential. Art has no place except as predetermined sanitised "forms of arts enterprise which combine civic spirit with entrepreneurial skills ..." (Clark, 2001a, p. 3). The networked and integrated character of modern public sector decision making was regarded as antithetical to the autonomy of art and, therefore, antipathetic to its advocates.

Notwithstanding such objections, it became common place for arts officers repeatedly to urge funded organisations to start "linking with [the] government agenda and the big policies" (Appendix, 103, CP). Concern about strategic isolation was particularly acute within local authorities. The director of education services for South Lanarkshire Council said that "I'm on a social inclusion Scottish Office committee and [I] was gob smacked at the lack of awareness about [the arts]"



(Appendix, 103, CP). Drawing attention to the parallel need to evaluate and measure artistic impact within the language of the political administration the director of Culture and Leisure Services, GCC, argued that: “[we] need actual hard examples of culture in your area, of [the] arts making a difference, people getting jobs et cetera. [This] is part of the process ... the social inclusions document only has housing and health [in it] and [it] needs [the] arts in it” (Appendix, 103, CP). This concern was not unwarranted. On outlining the principles governing the Scottish Labour party’s management of the arts, MSP Susan Deacon confirmed that the party was keen “to see arts structures driven by the policy aims of the parliament [and] not the [arts] structures themselves ... [we will] ensure arts strategy is linked with other policies, for instance social inclusion” (Deacon, Appendix, 108, PM). Arts officers and government shared a commitment to integrating art, however, as was apparent in chapter four, artists were more reticent.

As public sector developments generally became more strategy led, departmental credibility and the status of different services were increasingly based upon their adeptness at conforming with wider national and local government strategies.<sup>1</sup> A CEC arts officer told me that the Arts Development Section service plan had been far more closely scrutinised by councillors recently, and that the team “have been asked in the last two years to say what we’ve done to meet [the] Labour Party manifesto” (Appendix, 49, GO). Political credibility was earned by pursuing stated corporate priorities and strategic goals, and initiating a number of internal departmental strategies. To this end, the department embarked upon developing a recreation strategy (1996a), theatre strategy (1996b), cultural policy (1996a), music strategy (1999c), an events strategy (2000a), a festivals strategy (2001a), and finally, a visual arts and crafts strategy (in process). Notwithstanding the effort involved in devising strategic documents, they provided comfort when faced by a managerial climate which valued clear and measurable targets and quantifiable outcomes. Strategic developments helped to formalise the aims of the department and articulate the ways

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<sup>1</sup> The government identified the following ‘cross-cutting’ issues which public services were encouraged to address; improving public health; addressing community safety and fear of crime; combating social exclusion; environmental sustainability; economic regeneration; providing lifelong learning (David Evans, director of Leisure Department, City and County of Swansea, ‘Arts 2000: Best Value and the Arts’, conference organised by Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management [hereafter ILAM], Manchester, 28 March 2000).



it fitted into, and enhanced, the strategic priorities of the council as a whole (see also chapter six). In turn, these objectives dovetailed with Scottish parliament and government frameworks to form an integrated, although not entirely harmonious, strategy network. The Arts Development Section was thus able to promote its activities as a discrete unit, one tied into a number of different levels and stages within the broader policy framework. How autonomous art remained within this political context is the subject of this chapter. This strategic political network became more pervasive as, eager to prove their success within its terms, departments rigourously accounted for their actions in relation to numerous intersecting plans and strategies (Capital City Partnership, GD, 1997 and 2000, and the CEC, GD, 1998a, 2000a/b/c, and The Edinburgh Partnership Group [hereafter EPG], GD, 1998), performance indicators, and targets (CEC, OP, 1999a, 1999d), set at both a local and national and UK level.

These developments were not limited to local government but also affected other funding agencies. The SAC attempted to re-brand the arts within a broader notion of public service by highlighting the cross-over between the arts and other areas of development:

We would hope to see the Government ensure that:

- cultural development is recognised as integral to economic regeneration and reflected within the Urban and Rural policies and European Funding programmes
- Local Enterprise Companies are encouraged to take a more strategic approach to cultural development
- the Arts and Tourism Task force is maintained and developed
- the importance of the arts in broadening students' educational development is recognised
- the significant impact the arts can play in improving health is recognised through more joint initiatives between health organisations and artists
- the growing economic significance of the cultural industries is fully recognised and appropriate models of support instituted (SAC, OP, 1997b, p. 28).

This joined-up theme gradually became more explicit within SAC documentation, and

the deputy director for Planning and Development, wrote that “A key task is to inform Government thinking and to encourage the arts to be included in other areas of Government policy... Working with others to encourage the arts in non-arts fields has become a greater part of our work” (SAC, AR, 1999a, pp. 8-9).

Government commitment to partnership working within the public sector generally, further consolidated the links between the arts and government, and the SAC also encouraged funded organisations to engage in cross sectoral collaborations, whilst strongly pursuing its own integrationist agenda. The deputy director stated that:

There are many examples of arts projects playing a key role in community regeneration and social cohesion and therefore we developed and implemented an advocacy campaign on arts and social inclusion. ... This resulted in the arts becoming an area for consideration in the Government’s Social Inclusion Policy and we are now investigating with a number of Social Inclusion Partnership Areas, the ways in which the arts can assist in finding solutions to some of the identified problems (SAC, AR, 1999a, p. 8).

Legitimacy, or at least survival, within the arts network had become progressively based upon collusion with, rather than autonomy from, government and other areas of public life. In *Creat!ve Scotland: The Case for a National Cultural Strategy* (SAC, AP, 1999b), Scotland’s national cultural agencies in conjunction with COSLA, declared that “cultural organisations are not, and do not aspire to be, the passive recipients of public funds: they wish to be active agents of development” (SAC, AP, 1999b, p. 7). The document then listed the “range of strategic policy objectives” to which culture contributes including: creating wealth and employment, conducting the national conversation through culture, expressing Scotland’s identities, fostering dialogue with international partners, enriching tourism, combating poverty, supporting freedom of information, adding value to learning, nurturing new talent, sustaining rural communities, bringing people together, building local organisational capacity, supporting innovation, adding value (SAC, AP, 1999b, pp. 7-17). A systematic attempt was made to use the Scottish Parliament to extend the function and therefore space for art within the overall public administration network. Culture, it was argued, “is everywhere ... a failure to take account of cultural issues leads to

flawed policy, as a glance at most housing schemes amply illustrates ... there is no national priority which cannot be advocated more effectively through cultural action. Sustainability has come to be recognised as a genuinely cross sectoral issue: culture is the next” (SAC, AP, 1999b, p. 20).

Its advocates attempted to instil a commitment to art as a necessity rather than a luxury, as rooted within the mess and praxis of everyday life, and as capable of supplying functional solutions to the testing social challenges faced by the Scottish nation. This was art as social, not pure. In relation to education and social inclusion in particular, this integrated, cross-sectoral approach to arts management and funding marked a return to the use of art as a welfare tool and was crucial to the fate of the autonomy of art principle. Implicit within this rhetoric was a recognition that professional status was dependent upon convincing key players within government that the arts progressed the agenda for health, education, social inclusion, unemployment and the economy. As I show in chapter six, making such claims was one thing, actually being able to demonstrate them was another. Before outlining key aspects of the ‘art as social’ discourse I look at how joined-up government affected the ‘neutrality’ of public arts funding and altered the balance of power between politicians and arts officers.

### **Politicisation : The effects of joined-up thinking**

The effects of the government’s art as social discourse is strongly apparent in relation to the SAC, which, utilising the ‘arms-length principle’, has more explicitly advocated artistic autonomy than local government. The National Lottery was at the forefront of attempts by government to harness arts budgets into its wider social priorities. At the launch of the new SAC lottery guidelines in 1999, we were told that they were developed “as a response to changes in government policy directions” (arts officer, Appendix, 98, S). The funding streams included; access and participation, children and young people, creative and technical skills, audience and sales development; local authority partnerships, and; cross sectoral partnerships, all of which are key government priorities (SAC, FD, 1999d) (Appendix, 98, S). Speaking about one such initiative, an artist writer complained that it was “another model of

control, another way of divorcing control from artists” (Appendix, 79, HE). Although arts council activities had always been political (Harris, 1994; Witts, 1998) they had not up to this point been as directly party political.<sup>2</sup>

In defiance of the additionality principle upon which it was founded, the National Lottery had become an unapologetic extension of government, and was frequently used to renovate crumbling public arts buildings under the guise of new work. In 1999/2000, £10,32,432 capital awards were made in Scotland (SAC, AR, 2000b), and organisations became dependent on securing lottery awards in order to subsidise core activities and attain any growth. Evidence of the creeping politicisation of the arts was increasingly apparent within SAC funding criteria (SAC, FD, 1999d/e) as well as policy documentation, much of which closely mirrored government rhetoric, its political values, and strategic aims. The gradual absorption of the SAC into the formal political network had been further exacerbated by its administration of the National Lottery arts fund. Jamieson (2000) argues that “Some detect a growing confusion or “smudging” of the border between the SAC’s criteria for disbursing lottery money and the grant it receives from government”. Peter Wilson, Centre for Creative Architecture at Napier University is quoted as noting: “political correctness [is] now stamped on everything it funds. The two strands of funding should be quite distinct. But what is becoming more apparent is a tendency for all projects to be looked at in terms of lottery project criteria with concern for access, universalism and community benefit, rather than supporting artistic excellence” (Wilson cited in Jamieson, 2000).

The arms-length principle -- highly prized by artists and arts managers but also fraught with now unacceptable connotations of privilege and protectionism -- had virtually been abandoned by the SAC when it began to adopt government priorities wholesale within its funding criteria and policy rhetoric. One officer admitted as much during an invitation only discussion at Stills gallery:

[The] hands off approach started to dissolve when [the] Scottish Office got

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<sup>2</sup> Harris noted that “whatever the claimed independence of the Council, historically it has functioned as part of a state apparatus, reliant on the government of the day for funding, selection of senior executive staff and general policy direction ... the Arts Council ... is directly, though in an organisationally complex way, yoked to that government’s political and ideological principles and policies” (Harris, 1994, p. 179).

more involved. This government [UK] started to be much more involved in the arts, and the ministry [proposed as an alternative to the SAC within the new Scottish parliament] would raise profile [of the arts], but [the] danger is this further removes the arms-length principle (Appendix, 117).

With political interest came greater interference. Once again popularity -- in this case of the political rather than audience variety -- seemed to detract from artistic autonomy. The much vaunted 'bonfire of the quangos', along with calls for the Scottish Executive to conduct a review of the organisation, had made the SAC particularly politically sensitive. Greater synchronicity between the SAC and government effectively broke that fragile consensus within the arts network around the principles of professional/artistic autonomy, self regulation and political interference. It also exposed internal conflicts between artistic communities and key individuals, dividing idealists from pragmatists. One member of staff at ECA remarked that "There is a complicated network of interests going on here. [There] is no room for purists ... [the] parameters are being set by non-artists and funders. Who is going to decide what [the] future role of [the] artist is going to be?" (Appendix, 102, CP).

Discursive authority, and the ability to associate with or assert a particular artistic ideal, is closely related to the allocation of resources (such Lottery funds), and dictates the direction and character of artistic practice through resulting policy documents and funding criteria. In this sense, control over the meaning and definition of art has very real material consequences as well as implications for the role of artists within society. In one public forum, the SAC's director of visual arts admitted that: "[The] Arts Council of England is seen almost as an adjunct of government, and some of the things going on there are worrying for the arts sector. [It] remains to be seen how the SAC will have to respond, [we] could find ourselves responding to government enquiries and this could detract from the work we do" (Appendix, 133). In a report by the Education, Culture and Sports Committee on the future of Scotland's national arts companies, consideration was openly given to "the abandonment of the 'arms-length principle' over arts funding" (Miller, 2000). Traditional lines of patronage organised around the cultural authority of arts professionals were being replaced by sources of influence and subsidy framed within



a directly political and utilitarian system of values.

Ruth McKenzie, then director of Scottish Opera, was recruited by the SAC to address the Scottish Labour Party conference. McKenzie spoke passionately about her commitment to inclusivity in the arts:

It's insulting to artists to suggest [that they are here for] anything other than to serve the communities. [It] is the belief of Scottish Opera, [that the] only reason we exist is to give value to these five million people, and this involves giving quality performances... Access isn't on the margins or a treat. [I] can't say this strongly enough, it is the sole duty of our art. It is why we are artists [and] come into being (Appendix, 47, M).

Dissolving the distance between politics and art, McKenzie concluded by saying "we exist for you, to serve you, and we look to you to help us develop ourselves as best we can". Her politically astute speech represented an astonishing abandonment of artistic autonomy by an arts organisation. McKenzie clearly rearticulated artistic enterprise into a form of service delivery, subjecting art to the will of government and the democratic majority. Not long after, McKenzie resigned from the Scottish Opera and was employed as a special adviser to Chris Smith and the Scottish Executive bailed the opera out of another financial fix.

Aided by compliance at a number of different levels, the balance of power was in danger of tipping away from arts bureaucrats, as it had done progressively from artists and arts managers before them. Exclusive authority had shifted away from a cultural elite towards a more overt and formal political agenda controlled by a new class of political professional. The character of professional power within the arts was changing, therefore, and arts officers needed readily to associate their practices with social rather than with artistic imperatives in order to address this. Different types of arts professionals, such as National Lottery consultants, and access, audience, community development, outreach and education officers, came into being in response to this changing managerial climate. This new breed of arts professional mediating between government and arts organisations, seem to have further confused the line between the aesthetic and social interests of the field. By questioning the

elitism of the autonomous art model, and electing to fund art with a social focus, the state sanctioned the development of particular kinds of art practice as well as new forms of arts professional.

Artists, managers and arts organisations struggled to achieve the desired balance between what many regarded as the government's contradictory demand for artistic excellence and social prescription: "Broadening out the accessibility of the arts - without of course losing any of the excellence in the process - has to be the aim, it cannot be achieved without subsidy. I lose patience with those who claim that greater access means compromising on quality" (Smith, 1999). The government's sustained challenge to the separate status of the arts, spearheaded by a dual market and democratic accountability logic, made it necessary for the sector to devolve new forms of identity and management practices which simultaneously glorified and protected artistic quality whilst highlighting the collective rather than exclusive benefits of this work. The community youth project at the Fruitmarket Gallery (chapter four), for example, involved the development of an arts web site which neatly demonstrated commitment to integrating the principles of artistic excellence, with the redistribution of creative opportunities to 'disadvantaged' audiences, while also enhancing the innovative potential of new information technologies. The push for accountability, conceived along rational and disinterested lines, changed the definition of the role of art to fit into evolving notions of public service, and encouraged arts officers to justify and fund the arts sector on the basis of strategic political interests balanced alongside, or over and above, the autonomous values of their funded organisations. Nevertheless, as the above discussion about community art shows (chapter four), standards of excellence varied according to whom the work was targeted. Further, social impacts were only expected when working with particular audiences. The ten case studies contained in the SAC (GD, 1995) report *Changing Lives: The Social Impact of the Arts* all involved disabled, HIV/AIDS, mental health, disadvantaged, and elderly participants. The improving capacities of art were selectively applied to the poor, unhealthy, disabled, and isolated.

When within their strategic interests to do so, the SAC publicly sided with government. As one artist writer also proclaimed, "SAC people are civil servants

servicing government will and not challenging it” (Appendix, 79, HE). On a number of occasions, I heard the SAC’s director cautioning other arts officers to “beware the enthusiast” whose passionate advocacy of art as a distinctive enterprise had become a political embarrassment (Appendix, 57, CM). At other times the organisation also appears concerned to reassure artists and arts managers that they remained committed to their values. Attempting to mediate between these positions, the SAC publicly reassured sceptics that the access agenda would not detract from artistic values and standards, for instance. In a public meeting the combined arts director stated that increasing access would not “reduce quality” or involve “dumbing down” (Appendix, 47, M). He noted: “quality and access are easy bed fellows ... access and quality aren’t opposed but are component parts of a complete whole”. Echoing the government’s position, art, the SAC maintained, was capable of being excellent and redeeming and of serving utilitarian and autonomous principles simultaneously.

The SAC played artists and arts managers against the government and Scottish Executive in order to maintain favour with each actor. The organisation was indeed institutionally obliged to accommodate these diverse expectations. Its allegiance was therefore difficult to track conceptually and methodologically, as it could not be guaranteed, was inconsistent, and was fluently adapted in accordance with different situational demands. Accusations about the SAC’s betrayal of artistic principles were simplistic, and failed to appreciate the adaptability of the organisation and the contrary demands placed upon it. The SAC appears caught between the interests of government and an increasingly confident Scottish Executive. It is also influenced by the priorities of local authorities, artists, arts managers, and the public. The organisation embodied this edgy negotiation between different and competing discourses, and its ability to absorb these contradictions was key to its survival. On his departure as chairman, for example, Magnus Linklater lashed out at the Scottish Executive, arguing that the arts were in danger of becoming a tool of government social policy, and accusing the Executive of making the arts part of a “grey political agenda” by ensuring “political jargon was an ever-growing blight on arts policy documents” (Linklater cited in Miller, 2001). The Executive responded that it was “perfectly justified” in using the arts as a tool for promoting social justice and inclusion (Hardie, 2001). Just as art had to accommodate an increased diversity of

expectations within its parameters, so too, the SAC had to mediate seamlessly between the contrary demands of its constituents, and its own private priorities. This is not to assume that the organisation did not discriminate between those influences it wanted to block or accommodate. Rather it is to acknowledge how affected it was by the actions and interests of others, particularly other more powerful or threatening actors whose favour it was savvy to cultivate. Associations between actors within the network were highly discriminatory. The SAC director's explicit attempts to distance herself from the 'enthusiasts' is another example of this.

As with the example of artist-run collectives in chapters three and four, coinciding with the interests of more powerful partners while appearing to maintain operational autonomy was key to maintaining one's standing within the network. Despite appearances, the boundaries between the inside and outside of any given organisation or sector did not exist in any meaningful sense, as the form and direction of each actor was in part gained through interactions with others. This interaction was not characterised by imposition and resistance, however, but was conducted on an increasingly involved and ingrained way, as the interests of different actors converged around common survival themes. The evolution of the network, and survival within it, was in this sense quite Darwinian. The SAC in particular was engaged in negotiating its dual commitment to government interests alongside artistic practices. With the adoption of the National Lottery for the Arts, it became increasingly difficult to delineate between these two remits, and, therefore, to conceive of this balance as a rivalry between external (government/public good) and internal (artistic/art world) interests.

For Foucault, liberal government defines itself in relation to the autonomy and freedom of its subjects: the power of modern government is predicated, therefore, on the exercise of freedom (Barnett, 2001). Freedom is used to legitimise government action, a contention which resonates with the rhetoric of both funding agencies and artists who justified public arts funding on the basis of protecting artistic freedoms from encroaching market interests. As Barnett argues: "If after Foucault, power is not understood as externally opposed to freedom, then nor is freedom understood as emancipation from power. Power relations are the necessary conditions for the free



exercise of any agency, choice, judgement” (Barnett, 2001, p. 17). Rather than being a battle between the powerful and powerless, dominant and resistant, the relationship between diverse actors should be conceived as a “strategic game between liberties” (Barnett, 2001, p. 17). By problematising oppositional notions of government and power, the ‘culture as government’ approach advocated by Barnett (2001) echoes my own contention that despite protest to the contrary, government and the art world, of which it was a part, were not separate and adversarial entities, but were considerably more integrated and complementary than might initially be assumed.

When within their interests to do so, therefore, each actor positively reinforces the values of others in what amounted to a mutually confirming system of authority and exchange.

“I believe the government sees how much common ground there is between itself and the arts community, for example in terms of education and the arts” (Robinson, 2000, p. 3).

We continued to argue the case for the arts - for the part they can play in education, tourism, creative industries, community planning, health and housing (Linklater, SAC, AR, 2000a, p. 4).

Power was dependent on adaptability, responsiveness, and compromise, not on the inflexible maintenance of prior positions, or on consistency of commitment across different contexts. In the proceeding chapter I examine the means through which funding agencies attempt to recruit artists and arts managers into the evolving managerial and operational climate, and consider the extent to which funded organisations colluded with these mechanisms in order to protect their own interests. In addition to the performativity and elasticity of powerful principles (and their enactment) revealed in this and previous chapters, what subsequently emerges, I suggest, is a public and private dimension to the operation of power as discourse. Using the National Lottery I have shown how joined-up thinking, one of the principle rationales driving the art as social discourse, politicised the arts by dissolving the arms-length principle and marginalised arts officers in favour of political appointees. I now turn to the notion of the creative economy as one of the



key means through which the government asserted the art as social discourse.

## **Art as social - the creative economy**

Whilst businesses had contributed to cultural activities since the 1970s, generally in the form of donations to established institutions, in the late 1980s private interests and market regulation began to intervene in and have active influence over the arts world in a far more sustained and comprehensive manner (McGuigan, 1996). In the spirit of its enterprise culture, the Conservative government had successfully emulated American style private/public partnerships, and attempted to transpose this model onto Britain's cultural sector. Throughout the 1990s the public sector underwent radical reform designed to modernise it along "market or quasi-market principles and forms of organization" (Keat, 1999, p. 92). The introduction of *Compulsive Competitive Tendering*, for instance, obliged local government to compete with external providers on a value for money basis. This in turn put pressure on funded arts organisations to improve economic effectiveness. The Labour government subsequently watered down this scheme into *Voluntary Competitive Tendering* which, along with *Best Value* (see chapter six), required a 30/70% balance between quality and efficiency respectively.

Although claims about the capacity for art to regenerate local economies circulated throughout the 1980/90s (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Hamilton et al, 2001; McGuigan, 1996; Myerscough, 1988), and the cultural industries rhetoric had gained some momentum (Hewison, 1995), the *Creative Industries Mapping Document 1998* produced by the DCMS was the most notable attempt by government to consolidate the contention that the arts made a major contribution to the overall economy (CIR, 1998). This assertion was subsequently reiterated through numerous government, Scottish Executive, local government, and SAC documents as an effective means to give weight to more qualitative claims that the arts were central to community life. The economic benefit discourse attained widespread significance. Even conservative economic institutions like The World Bank endeavoured to make culture one of the core areas of its comprehensive development framework on a par with education, water and sanitation, transport and communications (Clark, 2000; Shanker, 1998). Its

President James D Wolfensohn addressed a conference on culture and sustainable development in 1999,<sup>3</sup> and it was reported that:

The World Bank's interest in culture, according to Wolfensohn, was two-fold. First, that cultural considerations need to be embedded into all aspects of development if the latter is to be sustainable. 'This has less to do with supporting culture for its own sake,' he said, 'and more to do with making some projects reflect the lives and interests of the people they serve'. Secondly, there are development dimensions of culture. It is an important and undervalued resource that can generate income through tourism, crafts, music and other enterprises.

Wolfensohn considered the conference in Florence represented 'a critical state in our collective thinking and the role of culture in it'. 'There is', he said, 'a crying need to address culture as one of the great ignored assets which developing countries and poor countries can use to help turn their economies around'. There was also 'a need to provide a counterpoint to globalisation through respect for cultural diversity and opportunity for creative expression' (International Arts Navigator, 17 December 1999, pp. 6-7).

Through the efforts of the extended arts network, mostly arts officers, sympathetic politicians and consultants, culture increasingly came to be regarded as an economic solution, and, therefore, a legitimate development tool (Ford & Davies, 1998). Such developments marked an important shift in the way art was valued, signalling its commodification as an economic device. It has been claimed that the creative industries generated "4% of GDP in the UK - greater than any of the UK's manufacturing industry" (DCMS, CIR, 1999a). The notion of a creative economy was also used as an uncontroversial means through which to legitimise and inflate the significance of arts funding within the wider political agenda, enabling sceptical politicians to conceive of, and justify, public investment in instrumental terms.

The Creative Industries are not a fringe benefit for Britain's economy - they are right at the heart of it. We are one of the most creative countries on earth. ... In an ever more competitive world economy Britain has to play to its strengths. We must exploit this potential and assure our place in the world market. World wide, the rate of growth for the Creative Industries is twice

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<sup>3</sup> 'Culture Counts: Financing, Resources and the Economics of Culture in Sustainable Development', conference convened by the World Bank and the Italian Government in co-operation with UNESCO, in Florence, 4-7 October 1999.

that of any other sector. We cannot afford to be left behind (Chris Smith, DCMS, PR, 1999c).

Arts organisations became increasingly rationalised as businesses within a leisure sector (Witts, 1998). In a meeting with CEC and SAC officials for instance, there was an apparent shift in priorities away from supporting young artists producing work of artistic value towards emphasising the contribution artists made to the local economy. One officer present said that, “Well I think it’s about economic benefit and the artist contributing towards this” (Appendix, 44, M).

This commitment to the economic function of art was not shared by everyone, however. Commenting on the controversy surrounding his appointment as chairman of the ACE, Gerry Robinson replied that:

Naturally, there may be some fears among artists and arts companies that to take a broader view of the arts within society and the economy is to threaten the spirit of innovation and experiment, perhaps even the genius that is the true creative force behind challenging work. Some have seen the appointment of a businessman to the chairmanship of the Arts Council as a threat to the very life-blood of the arts (Robinson, 1998, p. 14).

Objections to Robinson’s appointment exposed underlying unease about money (see chapter four). The establishment of an alternative arts council by John Tusa, managing director of London’s Barbican Centre, and others further demonstrated the level of discontent among artists about the notion of art as an economic multiplier. When funding accompanied such assertions, however, many found it was difficult to resist in practice.

The creative industry argument was accompanied by growing confidence in what one arts worker referred to as the “economic benefits of cultural tourism and how [the] arts relate to this” (Appendix, 66, CM). At the same meeting, Anne McCarthy, Conservative Party candidate for the Scottish Parliament, pointed out that her party has developed proposals to “link [the] arts, culture and tourism more closely towards better promoting [the] economic value of the arts”. There was a sense among many delegates that they “need to be more aware of tourism and respond to [these]

expectations". A cultural tourism action plan had been put in place in 1998 by the Tourism and the Arts Task Force (Scottish Tourist Board, GD, 1998). Among the political establishment in particular there was a developing understanding about the arts as providing a service for particular sectors of the population and the economy. The theatre strategy, for example, strongly emphasised the contribution Edinburgh's theatres made to the local economy, estimated at £19 million in 1996 (CEC, AP, 1996, p. 9).

Despite dropping attendance figures, inadequate box office returns, and a disproportionately high number of public theatres (eight) in Edinburgh per head of population (projected at 452,240 for 2001),<sup>4</sup> similar "guesstimate[s]" were used to justify renovating and subsidising the Festival Theatre at huge cost to the council tax payer (CEC, AP, 1996, p. 9). Rather than shaping and anticipating social desires, the artistic field was moving towards an operational framework focused on meeting existing non-arts specific needs and targeted markets. The social role of art rapidly evolved from an autonomous aesthetic function to a directed utilitarian approach. Edinburgh, it was felt, needed a world class opera theatre to boost tourism and its international profile. The lavish resurrection of the Empire Theatre into the Festival Theatre appealed to politicians and arts officers alike.

[We] have to see the arts as an industry, particularly in a small country which can't afford heavy industries. [We] have to sell the industry, [the] future of the cultural industries is [in] making these links between [the] physicist and the arts say, the financial and economic future of the country will rely on these links and not the sweat of the brow. [The] arts should see themselves as an international industry (curator, Appendix, 17, M).

Such cultural regeneration schemes have of course also been widely criticised as simply "revitalising fragments of the city" (Robins, 1993, p. 321-323), creating social polarisation and divided city spaces (Davis, 1990), and consolidating the interests of particular cultural classes (Zukin, 1988).

The requirement to develop increasingly elaborate forms of justification effectively

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<sup>4</sup> *General Register Office (Scotland): 1996-based Population Projections* (cited in CEC, GD, 1998b, p. 5).



disguised the place of artistic production itself by foregrounding social, economic and utilitarian outcomes rather than artistic achievements. A CEC curator complained to me that there was “a shift, that everything [is] ultimately about economics and art has to fit into this” (Appendix, 66, CM). New forms of legitimacy in combination provided a mechanism of disassociation in which arts practice itself was marginalised within public discourse about the arts. The evacuation of art from art. The autonomous status of the arts paradigm had hitherto effectively immunised the artistic field from judgement under the same conditions as other services, and consequently secured its right to claim subsidy rather than compete with other public services or within a competitive private market. It had thus ensured very real practical advantages for the sector and those it represented. Arguably, however, this isolationist stance also marginalised artistic activity in relation to other areas of public administration and failed either to secure popular support or to create the conditions of production necessary to survive the recent systematic removal of state protection. CEC arts budgets bore the brunt of the annual budget cuts, and from 1995 to 1997 the Arts Development Section’s cultural grants budget fell from £2,519 million to £2,417 million which, if inflation is included, represents “a cut of about £249k in real terms,” or almost 10% (CEC, AP, 1996, p. 3). The failure of many National Lottery funded projects to secure the required matching funds from private patrons was indicative of a related inability, or unwillingness, to capture the interest of the private sector (see chapter four). Many organisations failed to generate sufficient income through ticket sales, retail, and cafe facilities to meet the income projections written into their lottery applications. Jamieson criticised the SAC for neglecting to dampen unrealistic revenue projections in capital grant applications because of its desire to feed its “obsession with monument and the desire for visible, tangible evidence of where the money has gone” (Jamieson, 2000).

The movement from a state-funded to a market-oriented model eventually had deep-felt effects on the operation of the sector in both discursive and material terms, most notably by changing the values and expectations funding agencies attached to art and money, and correspondingly, altering the way they managed arts clients. This shift did not, however, alter the dependency such organisations had on state funding. With the creation of a burgeoning national lottery funded arts infrastructure, it eventually



became necessary to adapt award criteria to allow organisations to apply for revenue funding in order to protect fledgling projects which failed to become more financially independent. Having largely failed to generate substantial private investment in the arts, and to make the sector self-sufficient, arts officers began to play down economic viability arguments in favour of a more social appreciation of artistic value.

Consultants like Ian Christie were brought in by the SAC to encourage arts organisations to move away from a dependency on public patronage as a charitable gesture towards concentrating on the positive contribution the arts could make for society (Appendix, 94, S). Emphasis shifted from regarding art as a tax burden, to perceiving of it as an indirect wealth generator and social asset. According to a Liberal Democrat MSP candidate, “[The] arts are undervalued by society generally, [there is] a sense [of the] arts as [being] elitist and a big black hole. But [they are a] terrific provider of employment, health, export, community regeneration. [Art is] not something [we] have to pay for but [it] is wealth creating” (Appendix, 108, PM).

The art as social discourse enabled the profession subtly to temper expectations surrounding the economic viability of art, while also reconceiving public funding as an investment opportunity rather than a subsidy (The new Scotland, 1999). Politicians, consultants, and arts officers alike urged funded clients to adopt the attitude that it is “not what society can do for the arts, but how [the] arts can plug into society” (Christie, Appendix, 94, S). Art, it was maintained, did not necessarily have to be subsidised for its own intrinsic merit, but rather because it performed an essential social service. As such, the artistic realm was not to be seen to differ from other forms of public provision such as the national health service, education, or transport. This move towards equivalence of expectation and outcomes proved, I suggest, to be significant.

### **Art as social - education**

Creative industry and economic discourses are fortified by assertions about the social and educational value of art. Involvement in the arts was seen to improve participants’ learning, health, confidence, self worth, pride, identity, entrepreneurial capacities, skills, employment prospects, social contacts, awareness of environmental

issues, and so on (SAC, GD, 1995 & 1996b). The DCMS and Scottish Executive attempted to dampen the overtly economic focus of public arts funding in the 1980s, by projecting a proliferation of simultaneous benefits: “Education needs to be at the heart of every museum, regardless of its size, origin or ethos, and learning and education should feature prominently in mission statements, strategies and forward plans” (DCMS, PR, 2000c). The Arts Council of England (ACE) seized on this, and a statement made by Tony Blair about his commitment to developing the potential of the whole person through the arts: “I will tell you why Labour wants to put the arts on the political agenda. Because the Labour Party believes art and culture enrich the quality of our life. Because developing the potential of every individual is an essential part of our creed, and potential includes creative potential” (quoted in Robinson, 2000, p. 2).

Gerry Robinson, the newly appointed ACE chairman, responded by saying “I believe the government sees how much common ground there is between itself and the arts community, for example in terms of education and the arts” (Robinson, 2000, p. 3). Robinson expressed his commitment to exploring “how the arts community, the Arts Council and the government can together make that shared aspiration - to fulfil creative potential - real” (Robinson, 2000, p. 3). Subsequently, the principle of individual fulfilment/creativity filtered through ACE and SAC documentation alike, and it was highlighted as one of three educational benefits resulting from the arts (ACE, AP, 2000; SAC, GD, 1999c). Demonstrating the extent to which its operational priorities were continuous with the government’s education agenda, an SAC education officer told me that, “education is the emphasis across the board at [the] SAC ... the SAC priority is education and access for all, [and] social inclusion. [These] are all a big political priority” (Appendix, 75, HE). The Scottish Executive also closely aligned itself with the education agenda, and subsequently its funded clients such as the NGoS drew attention to “the continuing and accelerated integration of education programmes into all aspects of the NGoS’s work” (NGoS, AP, 1999, p. 11).

Local government also expansively adopted the education agenda. At one conference, a COSLA representative said that “education, education, education, education is the

agenda, and [there] is a very important role for educationalists and artists to work together in the millennium” (Appendix, 103, CP). Education became one of the key principles through which the value of art was defined, its social function formulated, and its funding allocated. Its adoption illustrates how highly responsive the wider arts network has become to shifts in political precedence, and how readily these principles were absorbed into the vocabulary of public funding agencies. Political interests heavily guided public arts practice. In an e-mail to me a gallery manager argued that “‘Creativity’ then, in the context of the creative industries, has been cleanly separated from artistic endeavour; the government is interested in creativity as a set of vocational skills which come with no baggage”.<sup>5</sup> Politicians no longer made secret their intention to harness the arts into mainstream education strategies, or to submit the field to the same justifications and account procedures as other publicly-funded services (chapter six). The principle of lifelong learning was used by government and the Scottish Executive to justify greater political control over the arts network. Professional status and arts budgets have become increasingly dependent on an ability to conform to, and excel within, the terms of the existing political administration. Due to adjustments in funding criteria, for instance, Stills began to raise substantially more funding for education work than its ongoing exhibition programme. In addition to a substantial capital lottery grant, Stills were also awarded £143,938 (jointly with the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust) to develop education activities with children and young people over a two year period, this work far out shadowed their exhibitions budget and significantly altered the function and purpose of the gallery (SAC, VA, 2000d, p. 19). The money for ‘autonomous’ non-welfare based artistic activities reduced proportionately, and it became increasingly difficult to secure funding for non-utilitarian artistic programmes from public as well as private sources. As Miller suggested: “My perception is of arts funding in the UK is that it has now become dependent on ‘instrumentality’, which is to say that projects (and artists) are funded not for the art they produce, but for the social, economic, educational or public health results of their work... This places on artists a burden that may interfere with their creativity” (Miller, 2000, p. 75).

Artists and arts managers frequently complained about the “lack of recognition about

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<sup>5</sup> E-mail 12 April 2001.

the benefits [the] arts give” (delegate, Appendix, 66, CM). Conversely, the field was also perceived to be over burdened with expectations and responsibilities (Appendix, 66, CM). The education agenda contributed to the proliferation of benefits attached to art. At a public meeting an SAC officer conceded that “we ask more of our arts than ever before” (Appendix, 47, M). While politicians and the public exhibited ever expanding expectations about the role of art, it became increasingly necessary for the field to justify itself in terms of the diversity of services it offered, rather than the singularity of its provision. A diversity of educational benefits rather than of cultural forms thus became a political imperative as well as a practical form of a government. Similarities are again evident with nineteenth-century museum development, and what Bennett (1998) calls the tradition of radical social reform which sprung from English utilitarianism. Bennett discusses the multiplication of culture’s utility (the central theme of this utilitarian discourse), as being focussed on the channels through which the public can access art. In contrast, my research would suggest that contemporary arts management in Edinburgh increases the claims made about, and, therefore, the expectations surrounding, arts’ social utility. As such, usefulness was no longer simply about a graded calculus (Bennett, 1989). Rather, the utility of art was measured by the number of educational applications and social benefits which could be attributed to it.

Strategic integration and partnership working brought with it the possibility of incorporation. A number of artists, arts managers (and even the odd politician) continued to regard the arts as vulnerable to exploitation by more economically powerful and politically acceptable partners. Reservations about strategic engagement sprung from a desire to protect existing operational parameters and professional assets, as well as from a commitment to preserving the identity and definition of art as a relatively self-contained field. Keen to protect artistic autonomy, a Scottish Liberal Democrat politician cautioned that it was necessary to: “be careful who we join up with. Education has a bigger budget and [the] arts [have] done a disappearing act in education. [We] need to get away from seeing [the] arts as the icing on the cake, but as something essential” (Appendix, 108, PM). A pursuit of power characterised strategic partnerships as much as an idealistic commitment to art as an integrated social phenomena.

Resistance to the 'art as social' discourse was also pragmatically motivated, as many arts organisations did not have the capacity or resources to expand their responsibilities or invest in new areas of activity. At a conference I was told that, "as an artist [you] can find yourself taking all this on and it is a distraction, and I've decided not to take it on anymore" (Appendix, 116, CP). New opportunities rapidly became a burden for organisations. Of particular concern was the suspicion that utilitarian discourses would fatally shift the balance between art and non art, finally subsuming creative endeavour and artistic freedoms into prescribed structures and restrictive goals and outputs:

Visual artists find in the Government, and in Tony Blair in particular, dedicated and steadfast opponents. ... Government wants an intelligentsia but not intellectuals, and certainly not of the creative variety. The message to artists from New Labour, 'community, identity, civic pride, access, innovation, excellence, reduces art to therapy, to collaboration, to passivity. How about 'reflexive criticism, agitation, opposition, empowerment'?' (Gimpél, 2000, p. 111).

As I have shown, by transposing apparently neutral political values into socially progressive artistic outcomes, government multiplied the expectations surrounding art while simultaneously jeopardising the autonomous aesthetic priorities of artists themselves. In the following section I examine how the notion of social inclusion was utilised to further consolidate government intervention in the arts.

### **Art as social - social inclusion**

New Labour advocated an expanded definition of artistic value which moved beyond established notions of excellence and national prestige to incorporate more utilitarian understanding of the socially inclusive function of art: "New policy guidelines issued today calls [sic] on Britain's publicly-run museums and galleries to develop their role as agents of social change, to help bring about real improvements in society and in people's lives" (DCMS, PR, 2000b). The political establishment was clearly committed to promoting the arts on the basis of an ability to serve the public good,



rather than the secular interests of a particular class or cultural group.

My fundamental aim for DCMS [Department of Culture, Media and Sport] is to make the best things in life available to the largest possible number of people. Our goals are to increase access to and participation in the cultural and sporting life of the nation and to enhance the quality of the experience on offer, whetting people's appetite for excellence. We want also to nurture educational opportunities across our sectors, to secure the fullest contribution they can make to our economic life, to promote their role in urban and rural regeneration, in pursuing sustainability and in combating social exclusion (Smith, DCMS, AR, 2000, p. 4).

The art as social discourse was accompanied, therefore, by an inclusive as opposed to exclusive approach to arts development. Mark Fisher MP stated in 1997 that:

I want to see the rich diversity of our cultural life become really accessible to everyone. This means looking at the current barriers, whether they be ticket prices, lack of disabled access or perceptions that some art forms are elitist ... The Government also places the highest priority on promoting access to the arts and developing audiences (Fisher, 1997, p. 4).

Keen to ratify its populist credentials, the government subsequently promoted an ideal of art for 'the people' (Wallinger and Warnock, 2000; Thorpe, 2000).

Established conventions which privileged a notion of arts for art's sake without attendant social responsibilities were no longer considered politically tenable.

And we're going to squeeze all the value we can out of that additional funding [£290 million awarded over three years]. It won't be something for nothing. I believe in art for art's sake but not in grant for grants' sake. I intend to apply two fundamental tests to the granting of this money. First, no more waste. Good art needs good management. Good art deserves good management. And so do we as the tax-payers and lottery-players who ultimately foot the bills... And that's my second fundamental test. New funds must be used to draw in the many, not just to satisfy the few... The arts - sport - the things of quality in our lives - are not just for an elite. They are for all (Smith, 1998).

The Keynesian settlement (JM Keynes was the first chairman of the ACGB) which built artistic autonomy into the heart of the arts council was being undermined by a

convergence of right and left-wing politics around the perceived inefficiency of the welfare state, the power of the professions, and the elitism of arts practice specifically. Habermas conceived that “as the standard bearers of modernism” (in McGuigan, 1996, p. 52), cultural intellectuals were discredited for “displaying the wrong kind of motivational structures” (McGuigan, 1996, p. 52). In his introduction to the Labour Party Manifesto, Tony Blair lined up “an elite at the top increasingly out of touch with the rest of us”, as the new enemy (Blair in Brighton, 2000, p. 37). On behalf of the hard done by tax payer, and the alienated majority, doctors and consultants, intellectuals, and arts managers all had the accountability charge levelled at them. Ian Christie warned the arts sector that the new government agenda “demands a break, once and for all, with the residual culture within parts of the arts world which see themselves as a population of artistes set apart from ‘the public’, whose function is to have offerings set before it in a ‘top-down’ fashion by the creative classes” (Christie, 1999, p. 6). As the speaker at an SAC seminar, Christie also highlighted how future funding for the arts was likely to be awarded in relation to specific government programmes accompanied by tightly-defined obligations, restrictions, and responsibilities:

The perception in Whitehall is of unreconstructed lobby groups demanding money for what they’ve always done. You have to find the vocabulary and partners to communicate what you do. [You] have to tap [into the] language of social inclusion... I don’t think there will be a traditional arts budget in greater amounts, you’ve had your increases in the last few years and there are other areas [which] will be the way forward (Christie, Appendix, 94, S).<sup>6</sup>

The discourse of ‘art as social’ would seem to be utilised as a Trojan horse to diminish the currency of artistic and professional autonomy while ushering in a more politically and administratively refined funding paradigm.

Arguments about the social and economic impact of the arts have been accompanied by an emphasis on modernisation and social inclusion: “Our cultural policy will be

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<sup>6</sup> In July 2000 the government “unveiled a bold rescue package for the arts, promising millions for the rejuvenation of an arts infrastructure devastated by almost two decades of neglect” (Gibbons, 2000). The ACE was awarded an extra £100 million a year from 2003, the biggest increase in its 44 year history. The SAC received an additional £15.2 million over 3 years in 2000 from the Scottish Executive (SAC, PR, 2000e).

characterised by modernisation and improving access. We are restoring free access to the National Museums and Galleries of Scotland and encouraging access to the arts particularly amongst our young people” (Scottish New Labour, GD, 1998, p. 20). Social inclusion, or exclusion, refers to the combination of factors such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, bad health and housing, high crime, poverty and family breakdown, which result in individuals and communities becoming excluded from a secure and comfortable quality of life. Social inclusion incorporates related priorities and policy areas including: increased access, sustainability, lifelong learning, neighbourhood renewal, after-schools activities, healthy living centres, crime and disorder. These principles became manifest within the art world through initiatives such as audience development, access, and lifelong learning. In 1998 the SAC launched its Audience, Sales and Marketing Unit as part of a “new drive to increase audiences” (SAC, PR, 1998). In 1999 it allocated £2.2 million over three years for audience research and regeneration (Miller, 1999).<sup>7</sup> Emphasis shifted away from the immediate or fleeting effects of artistic engagement towards highlighting measurable outcomes and the lasting benefits which result from participation in the arts (Kent, 2000). There was a “growing interest in focus on the outcomes of government action rather than inputs” (SAC, AP, 1999b, p. 23). The research examined in chapter six indicates that the stress on social outcomes alongside artistic excellence catalysed a widening discrepancy between the interests of artists/arts managers and government/arts officers (chapter six).

Conceived in cultural as well as economic terms, social inclusion became a primary means through which to justify arts funding, and was infused into cultural government at every level: “‘social exclusion’ and ‘access’ together now appear to be the two concepts that most permeate thinking and policy in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport” (The Earl of Clancarty, 1999). Arts Minister Alan Howarth MP stated that “Tackling social inclusion is a top priority for this Government. Museums and galleries can play their part by acting in bold and imaginative ways. They must develop services which meet the needs of their local communities, and to involve those directly affected at all stages in the process”

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<sup>7</sup> Similarly, announcing a “new era for the arts” in his inaugural lecture, Gerry Robinson stated that “Widening access to the arts and acting imaginatively to bring in and keep new audiences will be right at the core of everything we do at the Arts Council” (Robinson, 1998, p. 5).

(DCMS, PR, 2000b). Similarly, in an election speech Susan Deacon MSP remarked that Scottish New Labour wanted to “ensure arts strategy is linked into other policies, i.e. social inclusion. [We] want to see the arts embraced as part of a broader push to reduce social exclusion” (Appendix, 108, PM). The social inclusion agenda was embraced by local government, in part due to its synchronicity with government and Scottish Executive ideologies and practices (see chapter three). Not only was access to museums and galleries to be made free -- in March 1999 Chris Smith announced £13 million to extend free access to museums -- but such institutions were expected to become answerable to the public:

In return for the investment they receive, organisations and institutions funded by Government have agreed to set targets for increasing public access and involvement in their activities, as well [sic] targets covering management and budgeting standards. These agreements are at the heart of the Government’s ‘something for something’ cultural strategy (DCMS, PR, 1999b).

The new funding agreements further consolidated the presence of the public within the arts network by linking grant awards to tangible access targets: “The Government is making the largest ever increase in cultural funding over the next three years, and the public has a right to expect something in return for that investment” (Smith, DCMS, PR, 1999b). Public funding agencies expected arts organisations to start “addressing the needs and hopes of those on the margins of society” (Howarth, DCMS, PR, 2000b) in an active and inclusive way, and to involve traditional non attenders. Government was indicating its intention to extend accountability measures into the heart of the artistic realm by democratising decision-making mechanisms. For the first time public subsidy for the arts had, at least officially, become directly dependent upon public approval.

Following a report by the Scottish Office (GD, 1998), Community Planning (CEC, GD, 1998c) became central to this drive to improve services by forging decision making partnerships between different agencies, sectors and communities. The Edinburgh Partnership Group [hereafter EPG], for instance, involved the police, water, health, and tourist boards, higher/further education, chamber of commerce, and

others alongside the council. By consulting relevant groups and local people, the partnership produced a five year plan for the city (EPG, GD, 1998), which was used to inform development across the board. The principles of local consultation contained within Community Planning were intended to influence area-based arts policies as well as the Recreation Department Service Plan (CEC, GD, 1999a), and thus to consolidate public involvement within recreation provision.

My research clearly shows that in principle funding agencies were expected to become more inclusive, transparent, and publicly accountable. On 25 January 2000 the SAC reluctantly opened its first Council meeting to a small but dedicated group of public observers. I went to two further meetings and was struck by how administrative processes could inspire such a defensive and conspiratorial response from those self-appointed 'SAC watchers' (artists, managers, writers for *Variant* and freelance workers) with whom I attended.<sup>8</sup> I was unconvinced that the SAC's gesture towards transparency had actually made any difference as both the organisation and its detractors seemed singularly unaltered by greater exposure to each other.

While potentially upsetting the balance of control within the arts network, social inclusion was also recognised by funding agencies as a professional opportunity. At one seminar, Bridget McConnell, of Glasgow City Council, declared that: "What [we] are trying to do in Glasgow is argue [that you] have to have [the] arts as part of social inclusion. For me the money is there, but [the] trick is to get the money and win the argument. [You] can't have social inclusion, [it] can't happen without art and culture. [We] [the council] can't communicate with [the] public without artists" (Appendix, 94, S). Failure to engage with evolving policy priorities jeopardised access to resources and status within the network. As "the mantra of today's art apparatus ... Culture, we are insistently told, should become more inclusive and allow participation" (Stallabrass, 2000, pp. 47-48).

I have explored the role of social inclusion within the art as social agenda. This enquiry has not, however, explained how the belief in visual art as being necessarily beneficial to 'excluded' groups attained such generalised acceptance. As Key points

<sup>8</sup> 'Meeting of the Scottish Arts Council', the Wynd Theatre, Melrose, 26 September, 2000, and the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh, 21 November, 2000.



out:

There is an assumption underlying state policy-making regarding arts funding that there is a universal need for art, and a further assumption that it will be regarded as a benevolent act to satisfy that need on the democratic basis of universal inclusivity of provision. None of this takes into account the fact that there is nothing essentially benevolent or democratic about either the work of the artist or the work of art, and this remains the case even if benevolent or democratic causes are claimed for the work (Key, 2000, p. 88).

Let me return to Kant and Bourdieu for some clues as to why discourses about the social benefits of art have come to have such acceptance. Kant's notion of judgement (chapter one), allowed for the particular or subjective basis of judgements of taste to move into the general, and so be universally enforced. The perceived unity of Kant's conception of taste thus became "the object of practical action" (Bürger, 1974, p. 54).<sup>9</sup> Kantian notions of judgement continued to be misinterpreted by the art world in this way, albeit indirectly, as a means through which to re-package the specificity of artistic judgement into a framework of universal laws and standards. This capacity to extend the specificity of artistic practices and judgements, and secure generalised acceptance for the authenticity of these judgements was central to the character and success of art as a sphere of bourgeois experience. This rationale also explains how within the artistic realm, particular definitions of value became divorced from popular consensus. As Bürger suggests, "the pathos of universality is characteristic of the bourgeoisie, which fights the feudal nobility as an estate that represents particular interests" (Bürger, 1974, p. 54). I want to explore this concept of universal commitment in more detail as I believe it is key to understanding how the art as social discourse gained such widespread credence.

My research shows how the coupling of art with social inclusion is founded on a belief that art is necessarily a social good -- a conclusion which is not regarded as culturally specific. Bourdieu and Darbel (1997, p. 176) call this 'the love of art' which they argue "is loath to acknowledge its origins", preferring to obscure its

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<sup>9</sup> This occurred despite the fact that Kant conceived judgement as founded on a subjective response which aspires towards universality, thus meaning such judgements cannot claim approval according to any universal proof. Herein lies the contradiction in supposing that individual reaction is universally applicable.

collective conditions and conditionings into strange coincidences and pre dispositions (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, p. 176). The instrumental bias of audience research (see chapter one) is an example of this. Such enquiries (The Henley Centre, 1999; The Scottish Tourist Board, 2000, 2001; VisitScotland, 2001) have tended to focus on mechanical challenges such as marketing, transport and opening hours, rather than to examine the specificity of artistic programmes and their appropriateness to non-attending audiences. The exhibition planning process, and the basis upon which curatorial decisions are made is also tightly protected from government and public interference -- although some artists do now present themselves as artist-curator in an attempt to unsettle curatorial control and demystify the decision making processes underlying exhibition design.

In short, the ancients and the moderns agree in entirely abandoning the fortunes of cultural salvation to the inexplicable vagaries of grace, or to the arbitrary distribution of 'gifts'. It is as if those who speak of culture, for themselves and for others, in other worlds cultivated people, could not think of cultural salvation in terms other than the logic of predestination, as if their virtues would be devalued if they had been acquired, and as if all their representation of culture was aimed at authorising them to convince themselves that, in the words of one highly cultivated elderly person, 'education is innate' (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, p.175).

For Bourdieu and Darbel this investment in the naturalness of cultural appreciation and the divinity of art enables the cultivated to disguise the collective institutions, learning, rules and privileges which breed culture and cultured dispositions. "The myth of innate taste" denies constraints, rules, apprenticeship and specificity, and disguises its arbitrary nature by naturalising its preferences (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, p.177). This reading is important as it suggests that the arts network projects its own cultural interests onto others (the socially 'excluded') by disguising the esoteric nature of its preferences within the language of democratic accountability. Bourdieu and Darbel argue that by denying its artificial construction, and therefore its potential to be learned and touched by all, the profession elevates art, artistic judgement, and the cultivated few to a predestined position of virtue and grace. In such a way the love of art is able to argue for universal social applications based upon specific, but hidden, judgements.

Once the idea of art as a social good is accepted in principle, the category must be viewed as overtly ideological. Althusser regarded ideology as a conceptual framework not as false consciousness, as turning what was in fact political, partial and open to change, into something seemingly natural, universal and immutable (Thompson, 2001). Similarities with Bourdieu and Darbel are clear --the non-ideological policies of social inclusion and the love of art are powerful political tools, particularly when interlinked together in the manner outlined in this chapter.

The visual arts have traditionally and historically reflected the interests and tastes of small and powerful sections of society. These classes have tended to universalise *their* tastes, experiences and culture as being *the* culture of *the* nation. State policy thus far ... has tended to reinforce and support such universalisation's of the interests and experiences of particular groups and classes, adding to the category of the powerful and the influential, the newer professional classes (Pearson, 1982, p. 109).

The actions of those state and professional actors in Edinburgh who regard art as serving the needs of society as a whole, and not the interests of particular cultural groups or classes, is an illustration of Althusser's explanation of ideology. Under the guise of universal relevance artistic patronage has been established as a collective duty. Accordingly, art in the twentieth century was redefined into the language of public service, and weighted with a moral capacity to serve the wider public good. At different points in my research art was variously referred to as; transporting repressed adults back into the creative world of children (Appendix, 12, S); having transformative, magical and innocent qualities; making better people of us and "changing lives and changing hearts" (Appendix, 47, M); empowering people and developing their sense of identity (Appendix, 105, HE); decreasing isolation and fostering self-confidence (Appendix, 105, HE); raising hopes and ambitions, and combating poverty of aspiration (Appendix, 116, CP & 47, M). Commitment to art as a life enhancing endeavour was shared across the different visual arts communities. As Bourdieu and Darbel surmise:

The religion of art has its fundamentalists and its modernists, yet these factions unite in raising the question of cultural salvation in the language of

grace. ... It follows that the contrast between the fundamentalists and the modernists is more apparent than real (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, p. 174).

Bourdieu and Darbel's art world factions correspond with the traditional and modernist factions discussed in the previous chapter, and also adhere to the same performance of difference. My research confirms Bourdieu and Darbel's supposition that their unity is (at least in part) founded on a common faith in cultural salvation and the innate qualities of both art and artistic judgement. They argued that the work of art is regarded as containing "enough miraculous persuasion within itself to retain souls of noble birth by its power alone" (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, p. 175). In Edinburgh its advocates adhere to a method of elevation which confers on the harmony and radiance of material works of art the power to lead to enlightenment (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, p. 175), transporting the socially degraded into the culturally enlightened.

The commitment to art as a form of social reform was founded on a shared belief in its capacity to fulfil the furtherance of humanity (Schiller, in Bürger, 1984). This impulse was, however, accompanied by assumptions about the cultural deficiency of certain sectors of the population. The manager of Castlemilk Theatre, Music and Visual Arts, for example, explained that their funding was awarded to help "increase the cultural integrity of the area" (Appendix, 47, M). As with taste (see chapter four), harmony of spirit was conceived as unevenly distributed across the population depending on proximity to life enhancing cultural endeavours. Art was routinely accorded a mystical power to enlighten and awaken dormant potential. It was used as a means through which to pursue particular ideals of community, but also as a benchmark through which to redeem fallen individuals, and identify and transform less acceptable forms of cultural community. Conversely, rhetoric about the pivotal social importance of contemporary art was off-set by the need for art and artists to retain their critical distance from, rather than compatibility with, that society (see chapter four). Art was simultaneously common-place and esoteric, intrinsic and transformative.

Highlighting the eschatological flavour of this "mystical approach to salvation",

Bourdieu and Darbel launched a principled attack on those ancients and moderns who prophesise “the Kingdom of Art on earth” (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1997, p.176). Similarly, of nineteenth century social reform tradition, Bennett wrote that “rather than representing power, art *is* a power” (Bennett, 1989, p. 118). In Edinburgh, art is perceived to *be* a positive power, and so culture and social good converge within public arts administration. As with the 1951 Festival of Britain, “the issue of public art rapidly became entangled with that of the individual’s rights” (Hamilton et al, 2001, p. 285). Through art, “The citizen who in everyday life has been reduced to a partial function (means ends activity) can be discovered in art as a ‘human being’” (Bürger, 1974, p. 48). Not only was art considered preventative, in line with Collingwood’s conception of its healing capacities (in Lewis, 1995, p. 215), but it was also utilised as a benchmark for evolutionary notions of national cultural attainment. “The arts are a civilising influence”, Chris Smith entreated, “Indeed, in many ways the arts and civilisation are synonymous” (Smith, 1999).

Conjoining with this view of art as preventative (community art), medicinal (art therapy), and civilising (art for art’s sake), an SAC officer stated at a conference that the organisation “aims to make the arts central to well being” (Appendix, 12, S). The impact of the arts on socially ‘excluded’ audiences and communities was overwhelmingly discussed in exalted terms, and arts officers, consultants, sympathetic politicians, artists and arts managers made high claims about the profound and transformative capacity of their work. This belief in the universality of judgement, and, correspondingly, of art as necessarily positive was used to inform the practice of art as a civilising enterprise, a therapeutic exercise, and an educative medium. In such a way, the notion of art as providing spiritual rehabilitation and material regeneration was consolidated within the public funding mechanism. The government’s social goals and political aims were also self-evidently confirmed as worthy of the subordination of public culture (Brighton, 2000).

Growing political interest in the arts as a means through which to encourage social reform echo those earlier nineteenth-century attempts to “induct the population into new, more prudential forms of conduct” through exposure to regulated cultural opportunities (Bennett, 1998, p.128). Bennett and others (McGuigan, 1996, p. 55;



Pearson, 1982, p. 107) have highlighted this relationship between emerging forms of liberal government at the time, and the role accorded to culture as a reforming resource. As with arts policy today, particularly in relation to urban regeneration, access and outreach work, the perceived needs of the disadvantaged shaped the purpose and application of aesthetic practices. The arts became one measure among others through which the government attempted to secure civil order and create the right conditions in which the population might become self restrained (McGuigan, 1996, p. 55). A love of art as an apparently universal and non-ideological property is essential to this social project.

Discourses about the social significance of art in Edinburgh were simultaneously based upon the separate status of art as a uniquely valuable entity and upon its (assumed) general relevance. Government and the Scottish Executive provided subsidy in the belief that art represented a realm of expression and experience which, although produced under specific conditions, nevertheless transcended the terms of its production to attain general significance. Conversely, it was necessary for the artistic profession to secure a generalised public commitment to the uniqueness of the art object (chapter four). Art had at once to be distinctive and general, a fundamental contradiction in purpose exacerbated by calls to introduce new audiences and expand arts applications. Conceived free from social constraint, the promotion of good taste within 'excluded communities' was not therefore presented as powerfully motivated, but as conducted for the greater good.

## **Summary and conclusions**

I argued above that art was materially integrated with, and not autonomous from everyday life, and that it gained its character, purpose and meaning from the network of discourses, materials, and institutions of which it was a part. In this chapter I have extended our appreciation of this conditioning network by suggesting that the arts were also framed by and through the actions of Quangos and government agents. As such, notions of art as a discrete entity or sphere of operation are again undermined: government and funding agencies are intrinsic to its structure. Art cannot be regarded therefore as having evolved purely with reference to aesthetic imperatives as notions

of autonomy imply. My exploration of the art as social discourse driven by particular strategic interests and applications echoes Bennett's reference to "this junction of the fields of culture, policy and administration" (Bennett, 1998, p. 106). In the following chapter I further extend this view by examining the administrative procedures, management practices, and personal investments which underpin this relationship.

As the previous chapter showed, in Edinburgh the arts were discursively constructed in a highly political and strategic manner, and by attaching essential virtues to the integrity of the aesthetic, the profession ensured its continual survival within a hostile resource environment. The language through which arts activities have been justified has altered considerably, as this chapter demonstrates, precipitated by a public re prioritising towards democratic forms of cultural engagement. In a competitive resource environment it is no longer possible to make assumptions about the autonomy of art and the intrinsic value of aesthetic experience. Consequently, arts officers engaged in a number of elaborate schemes designed to alter perceptions about what art consisted of, and more importantly, the contribution it made to society at large. Art for art's sake and the sanctity of the aesthetic experience was seriously challenged by the pressure to find more 'convincing' effects and the functional outcomes which resulted from artistic enterprise. The funding process required artists temporarily to suspend private concerns about the subordination of art to strategic interests in order to exploit current political rhetoric about the complementarity between utilitarian and aesthetic concerns. Although the arts community still attempted to capture nebulous benefits such as 'quality of life', and Labour was more sympathetic towards this notion than the previous administration, a wider and more systematic attempt to outline tangible instrumental rewards was prevalent. In the following chapter I examine this movement from intrinsic to measurable outcomes, by looking at the launching of a Cultural Best Value exercise, and the tightening of the cultural grant giving criteria and methods of evaluation.

The definition of art within cultural policy has expanded to absorb this commitment to artistic autonomy and usefulness, excellence and access. Although these discourses have existed coterminously through different art historical periods, it is clear that the

notion of social control, in more or less benevolent form, was again on the ascendent as a developmental principle. There was resonance between the early development of museums and the use of culture as an “instrument of social management”, and contemporary approaches to arts policy as the object of a reforming government (Bennett, 1998, p.129). While the public and politicians had ever expanding expectations of the role of art, it was increasingly necessary for the field to justify itself in terms of the diversity of services it could offer rather than the singularity of particular achievements. Difference, and an ability to absorb a variety of expectations, thus became a political imperative as well as a form of government. The SAC and CEC evolved into prime innovators of this expanded definition of art. By multiplying political expectations of the social role of art, officers were able to lobby for the relevance of art across a wide range of government and local government departments, and subsequently to increase the reach of the field into new areas of development. By doing so they consolidated existing budgets and secured new ones.

It was clear that the arts network consisted of separate but intersecting institutional and discursive frameworks which were engaged in an ongoing battle for cultural legitimisation. Power, and more specifically resource allocation was closely dependent on organisations’ ability to secure discursive ascendancy. Control over the definition of art and the functions it served was central to securing the position of art in relation to other public services and rival arts organisations. Consideration of the particular definitions of art which circulated within the arts network thus helped to expose the powerful divisions which drove and controlled the artistic realm in this battle for legitimisation and survival within a competitive field. My research demonstrates that an appreciation of how discourses about art are linked to particular strategic alignments, and subsequently to the allocation of resources, is central to understanding how power operates within the visual arts network.

Chapter four was concerned with the construction of the autonomy of art as a discursive category and practical process. In this chapter I have explored the multiplication of expectations placed on art to become more functionally integrated. In chapter six, I look at arts policies and funding criteria and the increased bureaucratisation of the artistic realm. These three stages -- autonomy, social utility,

and bureaucratisation -- are indicative of the broader transformation from a bourgeois public sphere to the welfare state and a neo liberal post welfare state model. "State policy towards the visual arts has been characterised by a conflation and confusion of the aesthetics, the political and the administrative" (Pearson, 1982, p. 105-106). The various actors within the Edinburgh arts network are located within this movement from aristocratic patron, to welfare state, and Labour's 'third way' compromise between state and private partnerships. Individuals, institutions and practices are carriers of various government discourses rooted within this ongoing and dynamic relationship between artist and patron (Ridley, 1987). As Pearson has observed: "State intervention has not simply supported art, in the sense of lending credence and succour to a pre given and value-free set of practices. It has radically affected what art is, how it is understood, and how it is practised" (Pearson, 1982, p. 7). The status of quangos as undemocratically accountable forms of public administration, separate from the state in law, effectively ensured that government withdraw from involvement in the substance of cultural policy, thus making Arts Councils self responsible. The arms-length principle further enabled Arts Councils to act as independent intermediaries between state and civil society, balancing a provision between the pitfalls of direct government control and the 'insidious' pressures of commercial sponsorship.

I argue that the welfare state model, falling as it does in the gap between nineteenth-century liberalism (with its attendant social ambitions) and the neo liberalism of the market model, persists in diluted form throughout the Edinburgh network, most prominently through the reforming aspirations of the Labour government. Combined with the market logic of the creative industry paradigm, this social democratic discourse has with increased urgency dissolved political commitment to the autonomy of art. The evolution of the category of 'art' embodies this tension between bourgeois, welfare, and market sensibilities. The simultaneous requirement for arts organisations to demonstrate artistic excellence, popular appeal, utilitarian outcomes and managerial effectiveness is indicative of this confusion of purpose which others have recognised in the administration of culture (Bennett, 1998; Edgar, 2000; McGuigan 1996; Pearson, 1982). It may also be indicative of a crisis in bourgeois cultural confidence as a result of which it was no longer considered

politically acceptable to fund art for its own sake.



## The 'funding game'<sup>1</sup>

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If you wanted to neutralise the arts and remove their mystery, the best strategy would be to reduce them to psychology and politics, and then apply to them the secular techniques of management, to show that they are at least in that respect like any other activity (Donoghue, 1983, p. 71).

The previous chapter focused on the impact of government pressure to extend the definition and practice of art into more applied social contexts. This shift from an aesthetic to an utilitarian agenda was, I showed, in part precipitated by political nervousness about elitism and professional privilege in the arts. It was also consistent with wider efforts to ensure public spending was accountable to public rather than to internal professional interests. Cuts in arts funding, primarily in local government, obliged arts organisations to make progressively more extravagant claims about their activities in order to compete for diminishing resources. Chapter six adapts this notion of public accountability by looking at how it affected grant-awarding practices at the CEC. I examine two further features of the government's modernisation agenda -- strategy-oriented development and evaluation/quantification -- noting their effects on arts administration procedures, arts officers and funded organisations. Chapter six thus completes my exploration of visual arts practices in Edinburgh by looking at attempts to manage art as a quantifiable resource. Having focused on autonomous (artists) and utilitarian (government) discourses in chapters four and five, I

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<sup>1</sup> Gallery manager (Appendix, 15, M).

concentrate on the manner and means through which public funding agencies -- framed within the context of wider changes in arts administration -- instituted and asserted the modernising agenda. My research here foregrounds the role of civil servants and of bureaucratic processes, both hitherto neglected in academic conceptualisations of 'the art world' (Edwards, 1999; Furlong, 1996; Wolff, 1994). By so doing I focus on the emotional and subjective components of the network which were not discussed in chapters three to five. I conclude by looking at how the modernising of arts administration affected funded clients and abiding notions of artistic sovereignty.

Following Georgina Born's (1995) work on IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique Musique), I view the CEC as a complex sociocultural body. My approach is to see the Arts Development Section as a legitimate domain of ethnographic enquiry, whilst also arguing that the administrative processes which sustain public funding agencies should be acknowledged as important instruments in the organisation of art. Moreover, although ANT provides a useful formulation for considering the role of such material entities it does not theorise the experiential aspects of networks. In this chapter I am interested in the proposition that policy making and administration is a personal process (Shore and Wright, 1997). I explore how as a result of modernisation arts officers find themselves torn between contradictory requirements and responsibilities. Drawing on Born's (1995) notion of 'splitting' (see below) I suggest that this capacity to embody contradictory positions is in part dependent on the strategic denial of undesirable 'truths'. The commitment to grant-awarding practices as rational involves the suppression of emotional and subjective components, for instance. By approaching arts administration as a subjective process I problematise the contention that grant awarding procedures are/or can be pure and objective.

I first focus on the movement towards strategy-driven working within local government, examining how this agenda affected the kind of work arts officers did while also ushering in a new kind of arts administrator dominated by mechanistic rather than practical concerns. I am interested in how arts officers colluded with and were affected by these developments. Along with the governmentality thesis, culture

as government approaches in geography have also highlighted how the subjective techniques of government are self-regulatory rather than necessarily oppressive, re-orienting political rule through a multitude of diverse strategies and locations, in this case, individual professionals and the bureaucratic processes they develop (Barnett, 2001). This idea of dispersal further challenges sovereign conceptions of power and reinforces an appreciation of the more complicated locations and scales of government (Philo, 1992). Government is not simply limited to state, but extends its interests through an array of concepts, political rationales and organising practices as a web of actions and actors reaching into individual subjects and the spaces, practices, and institutions of art, all of which actively respond to its rule. Both Barnett (2001) and Bennett (1998) highlight how the politics of cultural institutions involve a struggle for 'hearts and minds' (Barnett, 2001, p. 11), but they also caution against over-emphasising the politics of consciousness, preferring to highlight how self-regulation is achieved through "the deployment of definite technologies of behaviour and forms of management" (Bennett, 1990, p. 270). This subjective approach to power has enabled geographers to see how the macrodomains of government and administration are also linked to the microdomains of the individual, cultural and personal (Barnett, 2001). Bennett (1998) has also presented a view of culture itself as a way of governing the conduct of conduct, and consequently, as being inherently governmental. In this chapter my concern lies with the modernisation of arts administration into an efficient form of government, a process which involves both administrative techniques and active subjects.

I subsequently review the funding and evaluation processes adopted by the Arts Development Section at the CEC. My research implies that by administering grant schemes the council significantly refined and extended its own operation into distant/other spaces, an extended network of local effects (Latour, 1993). The means through which bureaucrats asserted the government's utilitarian agenda will be shown to be challenged by artists and arts managers' commitment to art as necessarily separate (autonomous) from administration and free therefore to follow its own creative impulses and internally-generated sense of purpose. As such, the category 'art' as an essentially creative enterprise is juxtaposed against the bureaucratic impulses of government, and what Adorno (1991) has called the 'culture industry'.

These sections are about the technical means through which the 'autonomy' of art was further undermined. Of particular dispute -- as I show -- was the development of new validation measures and performance criteria which artists and arts managers tended to view as imposing restrictive and reductive accounts onto what was essentially an immeasurable, unpredictable, and self-governing media. Artists' resistance to the bureaucratisation of the field could be fierce, and my research suggests that a hostile distinction of purpose emerged between arts practice and management, cultural and political spheres. Using the notion of 'the funding game', I also suggest that through the grant awarding process artists colluded with, as well as resisted, the administrative agenda. An agenda which contrary to its ideal, was not ideologically neutral or objectively applied.

Perrow's dominant power model suggests that complex organisations such as local authorities should be analysed through their networks in order to trace the ties which bind them to wider contexts such as the state and the cultural system (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992). As cultural phenomena, these institutions are enacted daily and socially constructed through "nets of collective action" (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 34). Although sentient to the cultural, context-laden and networked character of complex organisations, these accounts fail to consider the material means through which such institutions constitute and pursue their goals. In contrast, Latour (1999) argues that if we are to understand scientific rationales we must consider the role of human and material actors within evolving networks of activity. Given the qualification outlined in chapter two, I suggest it is useful to consider the role of material resources in shaping discourses about art. I show how the category 'art' is defined and asserted through a combination of discursive, material and subjective factors. My research explores how grant assessment documents, inanimate in any essential sense, should be recognised as charismatic sources of influence, guiding actions and framing arts development within the CEC. I suggest that views and opinions about art dwell within the documents pages as well as within the actions of arts workers and the ideologies of the body politic. The chapter considers texts and administrative practices, institutional regimes, personal interactions, and the variety of means through which artistic value was assigned, as part of the same managerial and modernising process. These conditions, the personal and institutional, objective

and subjective, human and material, cannot be separated. Rather, they work in integrated ways to produce and assert particular interpretations of appropriate art. This commitment to administration as personal/political, in combination with Latour and Foucault's work, encouraged my sensitivity towards the generative links between apparently separate spheres of operation. Power and legitimacy (Born, 1995, Latour, 1993) resides within overlapping domains and is animated by the particular connections between them.

## **Modernising local government 1 : Strategic planning**

Given that the particular complexion of the Edinburgh arts network in part oscillated around public funding practices, the politics of assessment and who sets the agenda for it are of importance. Business practices and management models have been widely and rapidly promoted within local government in Britain since the late 1980s. The following sections reveal and examine how this trend was manifest in Edinburgh in a greater emphasis on strategic thinking rather than service delivery, new grant assessment processes, increased inter-departmental competition, more antagonistic relations between arts officers and management and more rigorous validation procedures. I provide a broad background to the modernisation of local government under the new Labour administration -- change driven by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions [hereafter DETR] White Paper, *Modern Local Government - In Touch with the People* (DETR, GD, 1998).

In the 1990s, services traditionally controlled by councils were farmed out to tender through initiatives such as Compulsory Competitive Tendering [hereafter CCT], or sold off to private ownership as with council house sales. The boundaries of public sector operations substantially shifted as conceptual and organisational models evolved. These changes in patterns of ownership and modes of service delivery compelled CEC to reassess its relationship with cultural grants clients while undertaking internal review and restructuring designed to modernise its own operational practices. Cuts in public spending throughout this period also perpetuated the radical realignment of council priorities as different departments jostled for recognition within an increasingly harsh funding climate. Although artists



and arts managers were largely outwith these debates, and lower-level council workers themselves felt disenfranchised by ‘conversations’ happening above their heads, the impact of these reforms was far reaching within the public sector generally, and, ultimately, had a significant knock-on effect on publicly-funded clients.

CEC appeared to be suspended within a perpetual state of reform -- the modernising government White Paper “presents a world where change is the norm” (ACE, BVD, 1999, p. 11; COSLA, BVD, 1999). Within this restless period of rationalisation, rapid movement and immediate evidence of action tended to be prized above stability and sustained development. Towards the end of the 1990s, however more attention was being paid to long-term planning and development. Resource restrictions and the community development lessons of the early 1990s had reinforced the need to attend to the long-term revenue needs of funding applications. Urban Aid funded organisations such as Solas (an HIV/AIDS project) and Pilton Print Resource came to the end of their extension periods, but CEC did not have the finance to mainstream them. A burgeoning arts infrastructure, exacerbated by the demise of Urban Aid and the tide of capital lottery projects, placed acute strains upon recreation departments across the country. Arts organisations were pressurised by the CEC and SAC to conduct wide-reaching structural reforms where appropriate, and to launch audience development initiatives, marketing, business, and three year development plans, as well as undertake equal opportunities policies and SWOT analyses,<sup>2</sup> to develop performance indicators and evaluate project work. Whilst these initiatives were valued for their high degree of visibility -- numerical calculations in particular tended to inspire confidence --<sup>3</sup> they also signalled a genuine attempt by funding agencies to promote forward planning and break with the poor management practices and lack of accountability which characterised the field up to this point. Establishment pressure to develop more sustainable practices was, however, accompanied by cuts in local authority funding which effectively militated against stable development.

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<sup>2</sup> Self assessment technique based on outlining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

<sup>3</sup> In reaction to the statistical preponderance of Selwood’s (2001) profile of the UK cultural sector, Andrew Marr complained that “... maths is the rhetoric of the modern world: numbers have become the fundamental language of our politics... Everywhere and always percentages heckle percentages... In huge, swarming societies we need constant measurement ... the more we understand the rhetorical, loaded nature of this numerical language, the better for us” (Marr, 2001).

In Edinburgh the CEC sought to promote sustainable development in the arts through more effective management practices. This managerial approach was not unique to the arts; it was part of a more widespread movement away from hands-on practical government towards a more distanced and facilitative delivery role within local government as a whole. As a consequence of the Labour party's endorsement of Tory-inspired initiatives such as Voluntary Competitive Tendering, the Public Finance Initiative, and the Public Private Partnership scheme, local government continued to lose favoured status as the primary protector and deliverer of public services. As one arts officer complained, "The Labour party just want to contract off as much as they can", remarking also that the acting director of the Recreation Department was "a real Blairite, and is committed to the idea of councils as a facilitator rather than a provider, as enabling others to act" (Appendix, 25, GO). Endorsed from the top, outsourcing was presented as a *fait accompli* within the Recreation Department. A consultant hired by the acting director confirmed this at a public consultation meeting: "City of Edinburgh Council appears in principle to be committed to outsourcing and New Labour are [too]. Local government won't be a service deliverer ... but a strategic provider, this is the reality you will be confronted with" (Appendix, 95). Arts management was caught up in the broader patterns of welfare politics or what Bauman (1992) referred to as the narratives of modernism. Adorno regarded the expert as singularly capable of representing culture within the field of administration, and of protecting it from market pressures. Specialist local government officers found themselves unable to defend public services from the encroachment of private interests.

Vulnerable to the threat of further spending cuts, prime ministerial criticism, a hostile local press, and unsympathetic taxpayers, local authorities responded to the new demands placed on them by arming themselves with an ever more complicated series of service plans and strategies and assessment processes designed to legitimise current activities and protect them from future attack. In the previous chapter I detailed how strategic, or joined-up thinking, changed the function of art. Here I look at how it affected the administration of art and the role of administrators. I was told by an arts officer, for instance, that in 1998 she had realised that if the Arts Development Section was to avoid being cut or amalgamated into another department

it needed to move into new areas of expertise outwith its grant giving activities (Appendix, 30, L). The section subsequently diversified by expanding and accelerating its policy development programme, thereby consolidating its reputation in relation to other departments: "We're not setting up [our]selves purely to [manage] grants but we're tying an officer to each strategy so they're responsible for strategy delivery and will report to [the manager]" (arts officer, Appendix, 45, M). The officer admitted that the shift from practical to strategy-related work was motivated by the need to anticipate "hidden agendas", and potentially hostile agendas, and to protect the department's services (Appendix, 26, L). For Born (1995), legitimacy is gained through reference to overlapping specialist domains. Power within the network was related to the relative number and type of connections with other institutions, individuals, discourses/domains of knowledge, and emerging modes of practice. Rather than simply being a finite and/or material resource such as money, power as I show was also a way of operating.

### **Managerialism and arts administrators**

A study at the University of Leeds revealed that organisations which were closely associated with the vision and aims of their local authority and were committed to the corporate whole, were more successful and less likely to be politically isolated (Davies, 1996). Correspondingly, the direction of arts funding in Edinburgh has become more tightly constrained within the council's overall administrative and strategic paradigm (Appendix, 26, L; 98, IN; 46, S). The adoption of the strategy-oriented paradigm had far reaching effects on the administration of art and the experiences of arts officers. Increasing the section's workload to accommodate this new remit proved problematic. One officer confessed that "I've got a strategy for every day of the week" (Appendix, 84, GO). Others echoed this refrain, complaining that "this department is drowning in strategies" (arts officer, Appendix, 39, IN). The space for deviation from this prescriptive network of policies and Service Plans rapidly ebbed away in the late 1990s (CEC, AP, 1996a/b/c, OP, 1999a, AP, 1999e, OP, 1999f & AP, 2000a):

Targets and projects are written into the strategies and then these are the only

things they [the officer's council] will fund, so you can't do anything innovative or different. People who don't know about the strategies don't get any support as they don't know how to talk about them and link them into applications. Where's grassroots [development] in that? The same forty projects which have always been funded carry on getting money because they are informed about which strategies to fit into and know what to say. Bloody hell, sometimes I hate this job (arts officer, Appendix, 26, L)

Officers across the council were similarly despondent about the lack of developmental opportunities:

non-arts officer	I hate working for the council. It's got worse and worse. It's badly run, inefficient and badly run
arts officer	There's no time to do development work anymore and that was the enjoyable part of the job. Do you have time to do development?
non-arts officer	No (Appendix, 83, C).

By discouraging individuality and initiative, this new managerialism further extended and consolidated a uniform political consensus within arts management, and correspondingly undermined the professional authority and autonomy of individual arts officers. Distressingly, I came across a few examples of autocratic and disciplinarian styles of management (Appendix, 58, C, 109, GO). Although local government was well known for its hierarchical line management structure -- "local authorities are threatened by having interesting and charismatic people working in their arts departments"<sup>4</sup> -- managerial conventions in these instances were repressive and uncreative. In the words of a senior arts officer, "Independent thought is a worry to councils. [There] is a culture of control, there's fear everywhere" (Appendix, 11, M, 26, L).

It is evident, however, that some arts officers objected to the new management systems, demonstrating how resistance to the bureaucratisation of the field existed both within and outwith local government. My research identifies officers as contradictory subjects concomitantly fearful, resistant and compliant. Resistance to the government's modernisation programme was in part based on a commitment to

<sup>4</sup> 'Partnership' workshop, Sam Shrouder, *Arts 2000: Best Value in the Arts*, conference organised by ILAM, Manchester, 28 March 2000.

defending established forms of professionalism, as well as preserving a service delivery function for local government. One officer in particular strongly objected to what she regarded as the privatising agenda of the “hatchet men” (Appendix, 30, L). Indicative of a more generic approach to public service management, this reforming agenda worked against specialist knowledges and practices: “This is a council who don’t want to be involved in service provision because they want to prove they are big Blairites. They’re afraid of service provision as this implies special skills, professionalism” (arts officer, Appendix, 30, L).

Internal local government reform did improve efficiency, accountability and forward thinking within targeted areas, but it also made the CEC more defensive, encouraging a regressive self-conscious which coloured administrative processes and dealings with the public. Officers, for instance, devoted large amounts of time and resources to processing new administrative systems and recording activities to the detriment of service delivery. Officers did not undertake as much project work as previously, and direct communication with the public diminished: “[We] don’t get as many phone calls as [we] used to, it’s because all we are dealing with is the [existing] clients, lottery applications from the SAC, policies and internal stuff. It’s all internal. It’s boring, very boring. I hate this job now” (arts officer, Appendix, 26, C). The emphasis on paper-based tasks left some officers feeling dislocated and out of control: “My job has become so boring now, and some days I come in and wonder what I’m doing. We don’t have any contact with people anymore” (arts officer, Appendix, 98, C).

It was evident that despite contact with existing clients being more frequent, with monitoring meetings twice a year, the nature of communication had changed (Appendix, 33, M). For example, an arts manager complained to me that their monitoring officer rarely attended performances any more and was more interested in management issues than their artistic programme (Appendix, 63, GO). One gallery manager complained that “[The council] aren’t aware, [they] don’t have a clue about visual arts. The city could just do so much more. The more I think about it, the more I think the council is washing their [sic] hands of visual arts” (Appendix, 20, M). Unsurprisingly the manager regarded the SAC as more understanding about artistic



matters, remarking that “our relationship with [the] city [council] is fucking us up”. Another gallery manager pointed out that in comparison to Glasgow, “art is rarely talked about in Edinburgh” (Appendix, 81, PF). Indeed, at the opening of *Evolution Isn't Over Yet*, I talked to an arts officer whom was singularly concerned about whether the work was hung at the regulation height, and did not refer to its quality at all (Appendix, 81, PV). A gallery manager similarly complained that their SAC monitoring officer only seemed to care about door size, the cafe, and acquiring audiences rather than their artistic programme (Appendix, 133, PF). The change from service delivery to monitoring and surveillance had diminished emphasis on arts practice within arts management, although this trend seemed more advanced within local government than the SAC (Nutting, 2000). As a result, a more impersonal quality of relationship had evolved between arts officers and artists, government and the arts. The management of art was becoming an end in itself. Tracing the roots of this trend back to the 1980s, Witts argued that “Thatcherism pensioned off the notion of administration, that is, serving. It replaced it with management, that is, controlling” (Witts, 1998, p. 445).

Specialist practitioner-based knowledge was being superseded by political authority fed through a new subservient breed of arts bureaucrat. In *Variant* Clark claimed that “Although some may close their minds to it, the administrators know government policy is all a load of rubbish too” (Clark, 2001a, p. 3). In a Foucauldian sense, the power of the state was being enacted through the production of increasingly specialised modes of individuality, the making up of a more conventional kind of arts administrator. The governed were active in their own government. Arts administration became self-regulating. As such, government power flows through a dense, interlocking network of enclosures and agencies, adjusting the behaviours and self-image of individuals, bringing them into line with socially approved aspirations, identities and schemes of management which transform and align them to government objectives (Garland, 1997). Garland writes of chains of actors translating power from one locale to another, and of centres of calculation creating “forms of inscription” which transmit messages in regularised ways (Garland, p. 1997, pp. 188-189). This chain metaphor is wanting, however, as it implies restricted, linear, and uni-directional movement which I show underestimates the contradictory character of

arts officers.

The standard job remit for local authority arts officers in Scotland evolved from an emphasis on practical and development work to focus almost entirely on grants assessment and strategy related tasks (see chapter five). The demise of art within the bourgeois state has partly been exacerbated by the commercialisation of culture and related market/populist pressures, but also by the rise of the administrative state. The changes in service orientation and job remit did, however, expose skills gaps among existing staff, and some officers struggled to adapt (Appendix, 41, IN). According to a senior officer, “I had to convince them [councillors and line managers] we could do this and now I’m in trouble as [XXX] and [XXX] don’t have the skills, and I can’t do it all myself” (Appendix, 26, C). These new demands also created personal and professional dilemmas for officers caught between new and older patterns of working, and institutional and personal principles. The new ideological approach to service delivery resulted in the emergence of a new type arts administrator, one directly focused on administrative, managerial, monitoring and presentational issues: the ‘management of management’.

Witts argued that the post-war shift in arts administration from a vocation to a profession was reflective of the requirements of the bourgeoisie to institute status and salaried security for themselves: “The Arts Council has been seen to develop the work of almost everyone involved in the arts except the artists ... The Arts council has now acquired a sham responsibility to sustain and advance the arts management profession” (Witts, 1998, p. 449). As the welfare state adopted the role of producing art along socially integrated lines, it also created the space for a new breed of professional expert, the arts manager/administrator to emerge. Just as the modern idea of art depended on the existence of a bourgeois public sphere, so too the roles of arts professionals have depended on the structure of that public sphere. Corporate sponsorship managers, and marketing personnel thrived in response to the call for new operational standards and sensitivity towards public relations, business interests, and value-for-money. As such, these professionals were indicative of a wider “flowering of technocratic, managerial and professional ideologies and practices from the 1960s onwards” (Pearson, 1982, p. 68; Witts, 1998). My research would

suggest that the evolution of arts administration in Edinburgh represents a culmination of this trend towards the bureaucratisation of art and the professionalisation of arts administration. Given that the impetus for the recent change in job remit came from managerial and political imperatives, rather than artistic priorities, we must acknowledge the degree to which the administration of art was determined by its capacity to meld with and respond to these factors. The categories of 'art' and 'arts officer', two of the primary actors within the Edinburgh arts network, are then closely bound up with social, welfare, and political undercurrents which extend over time and space and cut across public, personal and professional realms.

## **Modernisation 2 : Funding and accountability**

The CEC presides over an elaborate web of funding opportunities available at corporate, inter-departmental, departmental, area-wide, target group, and service-based levels. In addition to this, funding for council supported projects are available from external sources such as the National Lottery, European Social Fund, Scottish Executive, and Scottish Enterprise. The overall Recreation Department grants budget for 1999/2000 was £2,794,901 (CEC, OP, 1999g, p. 1). Running on a budget of £208,623 (CEC, OP, 1999f, p. 1), the Arts Development Section managed two grants which in total amounted to £2,578,460 in 1999/2000 (CEC, GD, 1999c, p. 20). These were the larger Cultural Grant, which had 45 clients in 1999/2000 (CEC, OP, 1999g, p. 2), and the Into the Arts Fund, which distributed £15,000 to smaller one-off community based projects (CEC, GD, 1999h, p. 20, FD, 1999i, p. 3). Administering and managing the Cultural Grant, my focus in this chapter, involves a series of 37 separate procedures running from October to October each year (CEC, FD, 1999j). Latour has referred to this as "The unending cycle of scientific credibility" (Latour, 1999, p. 78). Cruelly, after painstakingly picking through this process, all but 5 of the 1999/2000 applicants were recommended to receive standstill funding (CEC, GD, 1999j, p. 15).

Month	Action
October	New applications sent out
November	Second meetings with clients to assess funding agreements
December	New applications submitted. Funding agreements submitted
January-February	Assessment of previous year's performance and evaluation and financial projections for upcoming year
March-April	Report written and submitted for Recreation Committee
May	Final funding agreement signed. Cheques sent out
June	First funding meeting for new grant awards
July	Completion of SMAR (a self-assessment focussing on financial management) by projects funded during last financial year
August-October	Monitoring and assessment of SMAR. Assessment of new applications

Figure 18: Grants Process Activity Timetable Internal Log -- Recreation Funding

The Cultural Grant was closely aligned to various internal strategic priorities as well as corporate strategies. The assessment criteria for funding applications in 1999/2000, for instance, was heavily weighted towards meeting the overall strategic priorities of the council. Applications were marked according to whether applicants had fully, partially, or not met the following criteria (CEC, GD, 1999h, p. 1):

1. Corporate Strategic Aims:
  1. to provide quality services
  2. to promote the city at local, national and international level
  3. to develop the local economy
  4. to reduce poverty and disadvantage
  5. to promote a healthy and sustainable environment
  6. to consider and consult effectively with user/target audiences
  7. to develop the organisation and staff
  8. to provide equal access
2. Integration with Recreation Strategy 1996/99
3. Integration with Recreation Departmental Strategies
4. Capital request
5. Retrospective application
6. Edinburgh based

7. Equal opportunities/training policies
8. Co-operation with other partners/providers
9. Contribution to arts/sports/play development
10. % grant against gross income 1999/2000

With each funding round those unable to conform to this criteria would have their funding trimmed and/or progressively removed. By the 1999/2000 funding round there were no obviously weak clients remaining, and officers were placed in the difficult situation of having to devise new assessment criteria in order to identify the cuts required by council. For instance, the intention to cut clients whose CEC grant amounted to less than 3% of their overall funding (point 10) was added, despite being of dubious relevance in real terms. Arts officers, therefore, had to apply their own ingenuity to work within, and take advantage of, restrictive edicts beyond their control. For example, the annual local government funding settlement had enormous impact on grant assessment practices in the arts, and oddities within the system (like point 10) could be attributed to the pressure exerted from this.

As local government funding decreased there was a corresponding rise in bureaucratic procedures designed to administer this money. The cultural grant application procedures became far more highly regulated and demanding in the late 1990s. More questions were asked of museums and galleries (Fopp, 1997). I was told by an arts officer that the thoroughness of these regimes came to be admired by other CEC departments: "We now have a grant giving programme which is the envy of the council for some bizarre reason. So we're much more organised and know what we're doing at different points in the year" (Appendix, 49, C). By attempting to make grant awarding more accountable and efficient, and establishing systematic operational protocols, however, CEC also attracted some criticism from applicants for being over zealous. Believing these assessment procedures necessary, an arts officer told me that "lots of them [funded organisations] despise us as we demand more than [the] SAC" (Appendix, 11, M). Applicants found the funding forms onerous to complete and the overall process caused much anxiety for them and officers alike.

When talking to an arts officer they confirmed this by remarking that: "This process is pissing people off. The less money there is the more we ask them to do. For a



couple of hundred quid the number of types of hoops we ask clients to jump through is ... I totally disagree with it" (Appendix, 78, M). The officer also highlighted how this development had artistic implications: "There is no growth money, so what level of development is going on? If we're increasing bureaucracy this means this is taking up their [funded organisations] time and in a sense we're jeopardising the artistic programme. It's pathetic" (Appendix, 29, C). Given this, some organisations actually questioned whether shrinking awards warranted the time spent applying for them, or the resources taken up evaluating the work undertaken: "We pay more [in rent] than we get back [in grants], and [we] have to name them on everything, fill out fifty million forms and talk to [XXX] five times a year. Sometimes I think it's not worth it, but we need their support for our credibility" (gallery manager, Appendix, 15, M). Peacock has argued that:

the price they [politicians] would wish to exact is surely too high to self-respecting and independently-minded artists. That price takes the form of continuous bargaining followed by bureaucratic control and exhortations from the Scottish executive to improve accessibility by 'an arts-made-easy' dumbing down (Peacock, 2001, p. 14).

On balance the demanding nature of CEC funding routines was off-set by the legitimacy official sanction accorded to funded organisations. Importantly, CEC and SAC awards were also used to lever match funding from other sources and so, relatively speaking, the awards carried symbolic weight which exceeded their actual size.

In the mid 1990s it became more openly acknowledged that "arts funding administration had been 'something of a shambles'" (Tusa, 1999, p. 84). An officer admitted to me that up to this point, funded organisations had been able to get away with simply declaring how their operations fitted into CEC strategic frameworks -- as one artist said, inventing "pie-in-the-sky strategies [to] put down to satisfy the funder" (Appendix, 117, C). Poor management was no longer considered acceptable in Edinburgh. The officer also stated that the emerging strategic framework was likely to more fundamentally guide future work (Appendix, 45, M). In a meeting about a

new social inclusion strategy for the arts in Edinburgh, a CEC officer openly declared that if clients did not conform to the recommendations contained in the strategy they would have their funding cut.<sup>5</sup> In theory, arts organisations were, therefore, punished if they did not conform to new funding criteria (Appendix, 12, S). Funding regimes, an arts administrator proposed, were: “about conformity in the sense that it’s more convenient to get people to conform to structures than to be creative and developmental. It’s safer. Society as a whole, in general, but in [the] arts specifically, are looking after their own backs. Conform to these structures or then be shut out. It is about fear” (Appendix, 18, M). Corrective measures included cutting funding, intensifying monitoring procedures, and using funding agreements to fit awards to explicit aims and outcomes (although targets were negotiated with clients and were not always adhered to). Another artist said that if organisations did not involve community groups money would be withdrawn (Appendix, 9, C). Developments in funding criteria were not only reflective of evolving political priorities, they were also indicative of a new era of control, discipline and reward. The Arts Development Section, for instance, monitored funded organisations using the following series of processes (Appendix, 33, M):

1. SMAR
2. funding agreement (including 2 meetings a year)
3. application assessment procedures
4. Recreation Committee Report
5. attendance at board meetings
6. strategy development
7. collaborative grants meetings

In these ways officers extended the reach of their disciplinary designs by assimilating arts organisations into an increasingly demanding accreditation system, thus reducing their scope to escape this discourse (Donoghue, 1983). Miller (2001) noted that it was only on his departure as SAC chairman that Magnus Linklater felt able to “speak out on the issue [politicisation of the arts] for fear of upsetting the political establishment”. On one occasion, a delegate at a meeting remarked that there “is a sense of fear of bureaucrats in this audience, and particular fear of the ministry of culture” (Appendix, 17, M). The grant assessment and monitoring procedures

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Edinburgh Arts for Social Inclusion’, Management Meeting, City Art Centre, 28 June 2001.

epitomised a wider system of surveillance through which funding bodies attempted to manipulate and refine arts practice towards their own ends.

Ironically the Arts Development Section also came under scrutiny when as part of the council's Best Value commitment (see below) the Corporate Services Department was charged with conducting a corporate Best Value review of grants to third parties (CEC, FD, 1998d). At the time CEC awarded £29.7 million to the voluntary sector, which included the arts (Appendix, 32, GO). The review was designed to "establish a standard monitoring requirement" and to provide a corporate overview of grant giving practices within the council (officer, Appendix, 30, C). Conducted under the guise of apparently neutral modernising practices it was born from a wider interest in public accountability, effectiveness in local government, dissolving departmental boundaries, promoting partnership and cross-sectoral working, developing one-stop-shop services, and centralising operations. The review consisted of two questionnaires which each CEC department had to complete for the April 1999 budget round (Appendix, 34, IN). The first questionnaire investigated the public benefits of grant giving (CEC, FD, 1998d). The second measured the management and administration procedures and costs in place (CEC, FD, 1999k) (Appendix, 33, M). The latter questionnaire was divided in two in order to assess internal CEC departments, and to benchmark these against external council departments (Appendix, 34, IN). A couple of Recreation officers sat on the Voluntary Sector Officer Working Group which was involved with the review. In the meetings I attended, controversy focused around the design of and motivation behind the second questionnaire. Officers suspected that higher management and the Corporate Services Department intended to use the internal review to benchmark CEC departments against each other, and, subsequently, to centralise all CEC grant-awarding and monitoring activities within corporate services (Appendix, 30, L):

We were told in the beginning that it was a Best Value exercise to assess how well we do things for ourselves, but really it is about benchmarking and comparing departments against each other so they can cut costs. Why can't they just be honest about what they're trying to do? It's all just bollocks (officer, Appendix, 29, GO).

There's this whole centralist agenda and it's departmental, and that's what's happening. Why have monitoring officers to monitor the monitoring? (officer, Appendix, 40, GO).

Centralisation would also remove individual department's client monitoring and management remits (Appendix, 29, GO). As power was strongly linked to the relative size of departmental budgets -- for instance, efforts were made to include Edinburgh Leisure within the Recreation Department's grant management activities as this would add £6,828,232 million (CEC, OP, 1999g, p. 1) to their annual budget (Appendix, 71, GO) -- officers recognised that by centralising grant-awarding the administration would unevenly concentrate power within the authority: "People are quite rightly nervous of being benchmarked against each other. [You] could see grant giving as something to control" (arts officer, Appendix, 30, L). Officers were concerned about the apparent disregard for the distinctive skills and service they provided, arguing that long-established relationships with, and knowledge of, arts organisations was invaluable for evaluating, monitoring and developing the cultural field. The promotion of generic management structures would, they felt, jeopardise the effectiveness of this service and fail to adequately account for the specificity of grant giving processes (Appendix, 71, GO). One officer spoke in horror about this, explaining that "the principle is [you] can have a corporate bod who has bugger all knowledge of the arts managing our clients" (Appendix, 33, M, 31, IN).<sup>6</sup> The prospect was regarded as a further assault on specialist expertise and the power of the Recreation Department. One officer said that:

We have detailed information on each organisation but [this] does mean it [grant giving] can't be genericised. [The] point needs to be made [that you] can't always put this into a corporate response and if they [the council] want to get a better sense [of what we do] they can look at individual organisations. There is a substantial amount of monitoring and review going on [already] (Appendix, 71, M).

Although conceding that consistency across grant-awarding practices was desirable, one officer argued that it was "not necessary to standardise everything as this is the dead hand of local government" (Appendix, 78, M). Individual departments thus

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<sup>6</sup> Although accused by artists of having an inadequate understanding about artistic practice, arts officers were confident about their expertise in relation to grant-awarding processes.

resisted the closer integration of administrative responsibilities and fought to consolidate their own services and protect established individualised modes of operation from the generic tendency.

Officers also objected to the further build-up of administration platforms, suspecting those involved of using administrative processes to entrench their own status in relation to higher level priorities: "It's about [XXX] justifying his existence, creating a whole tier of monitoring. Monitors to monitor the monitors" (officer, Appendix, 37, C). Internal legitimation within the council was marked by a constant reflexive search for officially-recognisable terms of being (Born, 1995). The value and identity of the Arts Development Section was projected through recourse to a discursive genealogy which supported and explained what arts officers did. This tendency towards self exposure and replication was intrinsic to the government's accountability agenda, and was further exacerbated by the lack of trust which threaded through CEC's management hierarchy. Proliferating layers of appraisal and judgement threatened to bring arts officers themselves under external surveillance, and understandably they balked against this level of intrusion. Although the Corporate Services officer in question denied that the internal questionnaire was a benchmarking exercise (Appendix, 34, IN), the doubts persisted and he finally revealed his hand, admitting that it "will provide internal benchmarks on management and administration costs and from this look at other models to see which model is operating and then develop a best practice model for the future" (Appendix, 31, M). Arts officers were determined to frustrate attempts to bolster the position of individual officers, and the Corporate Services Department generally, and embarked upon a series of transactions intended to undermine the alliance between the two targeted officers and assert more control over the process by joining forces with the more powerful and belligerent Social Work Department which had refused to cooperate with the review (Appendix, 40, GO, 41, IN): "[XXX] is a snake and is not to be trusted. I used to think [YYY] was trustworthy but I don't think that now. At least you know [XXX] is sly, but [YYY] isn't so open and I can't work out what [YYY's] agenda is" (officer, Appendix, 34, C). In such ways individuals switched and manipulated their allegiances. A Recreation officer openly admitted they had a deliberate tactic to play the two other officers off against each other, and was sure



they were doing the same thing to him/her. As such, he/she was treading delicately between protest and survival, aware that too much resistance could marginalise the department's interests within the group, but also calculating that it was necessary to work against potential threats. The officer harboured serious objections to what was regarded as an undeclared privatisation agenda, remarking that "Sometimes I think I should just give up and go along with it all, just accept that things have to change, but then I can't help thinking that we are losing something and that I should fight" (Appendix, 29, GO). This kind of principled commitment was not unusual within the council, and when required officers would place themselves under considerable personal discomfort in pursuit of valued social ideals, efforts for which they received paltry reward.

In *Policy Processes Within the Modern State*, Hill recognised that policies are "likely to be the continuing subjects of dispute and modification" (Hill, 1997, p. 100). Indeed, in the end amended copies of the internal questionnaire were passed repeatedly from one officer to another. They worked as part of an "endless sequence of mediations", facilitating this exchange between rival individuals and departments, different approaches to grant giving, and competing concepts of public service (Latour, 1999, p. 79). When the final report emerged in February 2000 it stated that "The development of a generic application form is underway" (CEC, FD, 2000d, p. 10). By 2001 the Corporate Services Department had produced a joint funding application form for all CEC departments (CEC, FD, 2001b/c).

### **Arts administration, politics and personalities**

The government's accountability agenda transformed grant awarding processes, affecting the independence of arts organisations and officers alike. Apparently neutral and objective assessment criteria were designed to introduce rigour and accountability to public spending procedures. The CEC endeavoured to consolidate the probity of these decision-making procedures by making scientific what could too easily become subjective. If, as I have shown, however, art is context-bound rather than autonomous, can the same be said for funding decisions? If so, it is possible to conclude that the category 'art' (which necessarily includes the administrative

processes associated with its production and dissemination) is politicised and personalised in a more complete manner than previously considered. I found that applicants were not treated with absolute consistency throughout the grant-awarding process. Larger higher profile clients could be indulged and accorded a degree of independence which far exceeded that offered to others. The Edinburgh International Festival [hereafter EIF], for instance, submitted a very poor annual funding application in 1999, and despite the ruling that organisations were not allowed to re-submit their forms, officers were secretly told to give them a second chance (Appendix, 83, M). Regardless of how the organisation behaved, it was politically inconceivable for their funding to be cut. Political status thus granted certain organisations immunity from standard application, monitoring, and evaluation procedures. Despite aspiring towards procedural objectivity, the actions of the council were chiefly politically motivated. In the words of an arts officer, “it’s politics first and culture second in the council” (Appendix, 11, TC).

Administrative processes were thus highly-charged operations, embodying an ongoing battle for power and validity which animated the council generally, and specifically in relation to arts provision. Newer organisations frequently complained about funding outcomes which were “so steeped in historical funding decisions, [in] what we were doing twenty years ago, and funding has decreased proportionately” (gallery manager, Appendix, 15, M). A gallery manager remarked that “We know who the sloppy organisations are. [There] needs to be a debate, and however [the] politicians say there is a debate, they do impose their will” (Appendix, 15, M). It was felt that arts managers, artists, and even officers (largely powerless in this regard), were equally frustrated by the fact that councillors elected to continue funding some of the older clients simply because they had always done so, and because it remained politically expedient to continue this patronage: “What worries me is that ... once things are funded [we] have to fund [them] all the time, and these are marginal art forms, and [we] have to ask, do we care about them enough?” (arts administrator, Appendix, 18, M).

Over time the pattern of funding awards had become institutionalised. Decisions based on historic necessity monopolised scarce resources and prevented new

initiatives from developing. As such, the CEC funding system tended towards conservatism and consolidation, favouring length of service above quality of performance: “There is an awful lot of rubbish which gets an awful lot of money, [it] is about networking, meeting [the] right people, being fashionable, getting money. That’s all it is, [it] isn’t because it’s wonderful art. Art is seen as something outside, and not inside” (arts administrator, Appendix, 18, M). The more an organisation was administratively and politically embedded, the more secure it became financially. Rather than simply being based upon continual performance assessment, judgements were also strongly guided by political appropriateness, institutional power, neighbourhood rivalries, special interest groups, and sentiment. In one instance, decisions about which projects to fund were made in advance of the group assessment meeting. One officer present later explained that the group was dominated by a few individuals who monopolised decision making on behalf of others: “The group is them, and they make all the decisions. The [XXX] application will have been decided by them before the meeting. I did what I could and spoke for them [funding applicants] but [XXX] was against it so it didn’t go through and was recommended to go to Recreation Committee” (officer, Appendix, 83, M). The Recreation Department Committee was also regarded as being a stitch-up by officers I talked to. After witnessing opposition politicians being mauled by the convenor who also commanded his officials to bring public depositions to heel under a battery of statistical rebuttals, I had to agree that “they haven’t got a chance” (arts officer, Appendix, 83, M). The political establishment was comfortable about its own longevity, and could afford to be cavalier about decision-making processes, and impatient about unnecessary distractions which prevented swift progress towards assured goals.

Funded organisations wise to the link between political authority and material resources therefore made tactical alliances with councillors and recruited powerful individuals onto management boards to ensure they were more effectively defended when budget cuts were considered by the Recreation Committee in the annual funding round: “[you] have to recognise [that] in terms of local authority grants the arts aren’t top of the list (arts administrator, Appendix, 18, M). Political backing and support from individual officers was critically important. The more powerful the

politician and the more senior the officer, the more valuable their support. Tactical recruitment of councillors from key CEC committees proved invaluable. The council assisted the SAC by assessing relevant National Lottery applications, and during my field work. I evaluated one application which an officer later claimed “has been withdrawn [to be re-submitted] but seems to be favoured by SAC as [it] has one of their old staff on the board [joking grimace]. Mustn’t say that” (Appendix, 83, M). Funding decisions at CEC and SAC were, therefore, also facilitated through a private relationship-based economy in the form of strategically negotiated alliances between arts officers, politicians, and funded organisations or artists.

The nepotistic character of the arts network had uneven consequences, inflating some awards at the expense of those outside closed circles of approval. Undeclared alliances enabled the included to undercut institutional attempts to objectify decision making systems and counter-balance general political pressure to transform the role of arts officers from engaged specialists into disinterested bureaucrats. Personal and corporate discourses therefore intersected in powerful ways, simultaneously creating and undermining consensus, visibly appearing to progress the dominant discursive paradigm while somehow privately maintaining the coherence of ‘different’ ideals, systems and modes of operation. Power had a public and a private face -- what Irving Goffman (cited in Hunter, 1995) refers to as a front stage and a backstage setting. The contradictory impulse to protect diminishing areas of operational autonomy and conform to emerging funding paradigms created internal incoherence and dispute within the artistic field as a whole, as well as within particular organisations and individuals themselves. As chapters four and five show, principles appeared to be ‘performed’, often rather superficially, creating slippage between the rhetoric and actual impact of reforming discourses. Officers complained, for instance, about how a senior member of staff interfered with funding decisions, over-riding elaborate evaluation systems designed to ensure neutrality and equality of treatment (Appendix, 45, M, 59, GO). Grant applications were not simply solely received or approved purely on the basis of individual merit. They were mediated through the personal matrices of the applicants and assessors.

Funding processes are therefore highly politicised and personalised. One officer even

joked about how the unit's assessment procedure was unscientific (Appendix, 59, C). Similarly, the same criticism was levelled at the SAC. It was remarked that "the idea people sit in rooms making objective decisions is bollocks" (delegate, Appendix, 12, S). Carefully established rules and conventions and attempts at objectivity, equal opportunities, and consistency of treatment were all compromised when a desired outcome had to be facilitated for personal and/or political reasons. As an ex-SAC officer said, "I'm not a great fan of SAC, but ... it's extremely difficult to make transparent decisions" (Appendix, 12, S). Exceptional instances, whilst causing public embarrassment if made public, and triggering acts of concealment to prevent this, were actually integral to public administration and continually frustrated officers' attempts to make assessment processes rational and consistent (see below).

In some instances, individuals concealed information from each other, and in some contexts they were unfairly accused of doing so by disgruntled colleagues (Appendix, 59, GO). Strategic use of the photocopying machine to copy 'un-seen' documents was useful at times like this (Appendix, 98, S). Information was power. What you knew, who you knew, and what committees you attended were critical means through which individual officers ranked themselves within the working hierarchy (Appendix, 98, S). Strategies of inclusion and exclusion therefore operated around the policing of access to important individuals (Appendix, 37, GO). One officer complained that contrary to accepted protocol the head of department circumnavigated the power chain by blocking officers' access to a key councillor, ensuring all information in the department passed through themselves while preventing the officer from speaking on the grant committee (Appendix, 58, C). It was important for individual sections to nurture positive relationships with politicians of substance and senior management with authority. Personal politics, therefore, affected grant-awarding processes by controlling access to sources of information and lines of influence, and by elevating or discrediting the reputation of individual officers who were allocated the task of drawing-up grant reports and defending the spending options they contained. The party political nature of the council added to and sanctified this culture of secrecy, and compounded the hierarchical nature of the management structures. Although party politics had converged on a national scale (chapter five), these lines of dispute were persistently



active within local government (Appendix, 50, M). Given this, the system was vulnerable to exploitation by ambitious individuals or departments intent on curbing the activities of others. Speaking about one director, for example, an officer remarked that “he’ll do anything to get into power now” (Appendix, 30, C). In addition to manipulating information and personal relations, departments were also known to consolidate and/or extend their operational territories by moving into new areas of activity. As Rabinow observed, “The end of good government is the correct disposition of things - even when things have to be invented so as to be well governed” (Rabinow, 1986, p. 21). As I have shown, tension existed between the Recreation Department and Corporate Services over control of grants as well as the organising of events such as the Millennium and Hogmanay celebrations (Appendix, 50, M).

Negotiations between different CEC departments -- often positioned according to old district and regional council lines -- were frequently tense and antagonistic (Appendix, 63, GO). The ability to manipulate inter-departmental politics, forge strategic alliances, and remain ahead of emerging initiatives, were important skills for council officers. As one officer said, “the internal politics are incredible” (Appendix, 40, GO). Andrew Rawnsley (2000a) dissected the high level entanglements at the top of government, arguing that “you can never disentangle policy from personality, policy isn’t made in a vacuum ...” (Rawnsley, 2000b). This adversarial and personalised operational structure was institutionalised within CEC. Political intentions and professional principles were therefore relational, and were conceived and projected within working contexts which were animated by ongoing disputes, vested interests, and conflicting loyalties. Highly committed officers worked hard to defend their principles, often under extremely difficult circumstances, relying on their political savvy and strength of conviction to survive at the highest levels. Of course sympathetic and supportive, as well as trusting and constructive relationships existed between individuals and departments, but these were also intersected by the characteristics described above, which existed not as exceptional occurrences, but as an in-built part of the whole decision making and operational climate within the council. This finding is consistent with Latour’s methodological insistence on accounting for the ‘inconvenient aspects of research (see chapter three). These were

not easy times to be a public servant, and as Joseph Schumpeter observes of the development of capitalism, progress “advance[s] through a succession of crises” rather than through steady movements towards a clear resolution of interests (Schumpeter in Gray, 2000, p. 53). Of the Voluntary Sector Working Group, for instance, an officers said, “The group is so overworked it’s stopped working ... We’ve not had minutes produced even. It’s all crisis management” (Appendix, 37, C). Recognising the role of conflict as well as co-operation is key to understanding the interaction between the various actors within the Edinburgh arts network. It is also useful for understanding the involved social environment from which art springs.

Although I illustrate how affecting grant-awarding practices are, the formality of these administrative processes also worked to shield officers from the inevitable social and emotional aspects which arose when delegating public money. Procedural conventions were utilised by officers as distancing mechanisms and techniques for establishing authority and control over otherwise untidy emotional situations. Drawing on Klein, Born referred to this process as “splitting”, whereby objects of interest are classified as absolutely discrete compartments which individuals subsequently either idealise or deny/relegate (Born, 1995, pp. 37-38). In Born’s research, the fragmentation between modernist and post-modernist aesthetics was internalised by musicians who were encouraged by the dominant institutional culture to devalue their interest in popular music. In Edinburgh, it was evident that individual preferences and the emotional aspects of administrative work were dampened by arts officers themselves (Bourdieu in Fowler, 1998). Through splitting, distancing and denial techniques, officers were able to deal with the contradictions which arose from moving between different modes of operation and contradictory personal, inter-personal and professional alliances. Such techniques were useful when dealing with colleagues one disagreed with, when obliged to pursue actions one was personally uncomfortable with, or when it was necessary to withhold sensitive information from funded organisations. Further, officers’ formal aspirations were almost entirely mechanistic, and as many of them were ex-artists, their artistic loyalties were often compromised by these instrumental priorities. As noted above, many officers closed their minds (Clark, 2001a) and suppressed their critical capacities in public. Accompanying bureaucratic systems therefore attempted to drain out critical and

emotional content and contact by mechanising the relationships between arts officers and arts organisations, disguising their interactions within apparently neutral frames of reference and operational conventions. By so doing, a false separation was enacted between the officer as irrational subject and the work they did as rational object (Latour, 1993). Bureaucracy, thus served “to cloak subjective, ideological and arguably ‘irrational’ goals in the guise of rational, collective, universalised objectives” (Shore and Wright, 1997, p. 11).

Arts officers effectively hid behind these systems, denying their own culpability in relation to them, and even their own ability to control and define them. They made “a virtue of necessity” (Fowler, 1998, p. 18). As such, they performed a behavioural code which had no apparent identifiable origin, and which they could not be blamed for instigating. Arts officers projected themselves as ‘good guys’ working for the right cause, but doing so from within the restrictions of the institution they were a part of. Nevertheless, as French observed about the SAC, this splitting technique did not proceed unnoticed:

The SAC presents [itself] as being in a position of disinterestedness, mere observers removed from the fray. In the introduction to Pierre Bourdieu’s *The Field of Cultural Production*, Randal Johnson writes, “We would be naive to assume that it [the structure of authority in the field of cultural production] is innocent or disinterested”. There is, as Bourdieu has said, “an interest in disinterestedness” (French, 1997, p. 21).

The actions of administrators confirms the contention that “objectifying decision making serves to collectivise responsibility for decisions adopted, and even to deny, at times, the roles of human agency and politics in the policy process” (Shore and Wright, 1997, p. 10).

The changing role of arts officers is indicative of the government’s need to elicit voluntary alliances from subjects who actively participate in the making of their own selves (Foucault, 1991; Gordon, 1991; Rose, 1992). By regulating their personal inclinations in line with CEC priorities, officers colluded with their own ongoing transformation. There is resonance here with Bennett’s (1998) argument about how

the reforming work of culture in the nineteenth century moved from exterior forms of behavioural management to encompass the internal psychology of the individual. While Bennett focused on the use of cultural objects themselves to illicit voluntary alliances with the state, I am concerned here with how the management of art was used as a reforming process for those involved with its administration and to see how internal and structural factors and perspectives were integrated, and schemes of self management and subjective transformation, were aligned to the objectives of government (Cohen, 1994; Garland, 1997). Large-scale processes of rule were thus linked into micro political and professional processes, and individual self governance (Green, 2002). Individual subjectivity was not suppressed within the arts network, but was cultivated and made-up in the form of free subjects who actively aligned their choices with those of government (Morris in Barnett, 2001). The status of arts officers as contradictory subjects (reluctant/compliant, emotional/rational) is emblematic of this agency. Subjectivity involved constrained choices rather than free expression, which reflects Garland's contention that within neo-liberal techniques of government we are obliged to be choosers of particular services and ways of being (Garland, 1997).

Given this, when considering how government and professional discourses are "institutionally crystallised" (Foucault, 1981, pp. 92-93), researchers should look beyond the limitations of instrumental calculation and consider how institutional systems are reflective of the emotionally driven, moral and symbolic undercurrents which drive and shape the actions and value-rational frameworks of those involved (Weber, 1978; Green, 2002). Despite protestations to the contrary arts administration in Edinburgh was clearly a subjective and political experience which reflected the opinions and cultures of arts officers. By accounting for the multiple factors involved in decision making and including its inevitable emotional dimensions, it is possible to humanise administrative processes and draw in professional inclinations, rather than paint out the personal from the governmental. Decision making is not logical, comprehensive or purposive (Hill, 1997). The uncertainty of administration and policy making reveals both the limits of human rationality as well as the degree to which human aspects extend into the administration of art and the character of the arts infrastructure in Edinburgh.

### Modernisation 3 : Evaluating art

Colin Bell claimed that the aim of aesthetic philosophy was to discover “the essential quality ... that distinguishes works of art from all other classes of objects” (Bell, 1915, p. 7). In contrast, Wittgenstein argued that this kind of certainty was unnecessary with art. Indeed, the drive for accountability and efficiency which galvanised the public sector with the launch of the Financial Management Initiative in 1983,<sup>7</sup> omitted reference to the arts altogether (New Economics Foundation [hereafter NEF], GD, 1996). Until the late 1990s the arts were not measured or included within the national accounts (NEF, GD, 1996, p. 2). “That it [art] was ‘worth it’ was taken largely as an article of faith” (NEF, GD, 1996, p. 2). This did not remain the case. In this section, I explore how the Edinburgh arts network succumbed to temptation, and endeavoured to quantify the value of art. In chapter five I highlighted how with increasing urgency, the requirement to defend current budgets and remain responsive to the changing political agenda obliged arts officers to demonstrate artistic value in more politically appropriate ways (Witts, 1998). I now show much attention centred on finding evaluation processes which fully accounted for and promoted the diverse social, economic and aesthetic benefits of the arts. These indicators also had to be sufficiently authoritative to impress politicians and policy makers. As Worpole noted, “developing procedures to arbitrate between collective interests and private choices is becoming more urgent” (Worpole, 2000, p. 67). A mini industry subsequently mushroomed around arts evaluation in Britain. The more hard-lined quantitative evaluation procedures of the 1980s which focused primarily on financial indicators, efficiency and value-for-money had been challenged in recent years by a Social Audit approach designed to account for the social and economic impact of the arts in a more flexible way. The publication of *Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts* (Matarasso, 1997), advanced a social audit framework which enabled policy makers and practitioners to defend artistic achievement and promote the arts in close synergy with the wider policy and funding arena. Using case studies, the study systematically compiled a list of over 50 social impacts

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<sup>7</sup> This was later reinforced by the 1992 Local Government Act which required Scottish local authorities to measure their performance against indicators provided by the Accounts Commission (for Scotland).



arising from participation in the arts, extending these beyond standard aesthetic and financial indicators. The arts, it was claimed, could contribute to every area of social policy. Benefits included contribution towards personal development, social cohesion, community empowerment and self-determination, local image and identity, imagination and vision, health and well-being, skills building and educational developments, employability, local capacity building, the economy, and so on (see chapter five). The study was warmly received by arts officers and arts managers as it provided a coherent framework through which to promote the social benefits of the arts.<sup>8</sup> The list of benefits outlined within the study continue to be used as a primary reference tool through which to articulate and account for activities to funding agencies.

In addition to experimenting with social audit, CEC was obliged to adopt the government's Best Value initiative in relation to its practices and services. For the Scottish Executive, "Best value is a manifesto commitment of the Government. It seeks to improve local government performance in the delivery of services to local communities ... Best value aims to ensure that the cost and quality of these services are of a level acceptable to local people" (Scottish Executive, BVD, 1999, p. 1). Best Value was one of the primary mechanisms through which modernisation in local government was pursued. It was designed to ensure local authorities undertook continuous improvements of their services. Adapted from Compulsory Competitive Tendering [hereafter CCT] established under the Conservative government, Best Value retained CCT's competitive aspect, but tempered its fiscal emphasis by also prioritising quality of service. The Secretary of State set a moratorium on CCT until July 1999 (SO, PR, 1999), although "the threat of the re-imposition of CCT in the case of failure" (COSLA, BVD, 1999, p. 5) was retained. While CCT had "accelerated a shift towards a more management oriented approach to council services" and emphasised "running services in a business-like fashion", Best Value was intended to be more flexible and less prescriptive, "a process rather than a product" (SO, BVD, 1997, p. 1/3). The initiative "did not remove the pressure to deliver nor to apply competition", but introduced a fundamental change in attitude, culture and management style within councils by requiring them to "constantly

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<sup>8</sup> *Arts Development - The Pathway to Opportunity and Excellence*, conference organised by ILAM, Swallow Hotel, Glasgow, 9 October 1997.

reflect on what they are doing, to measure their successes and short-comings, and to take action to improve" (SO, BVD, 1997, p. 3). The regime had significant "impact on resource allocation" and the re-ordering of council priorities (COSLA, BVD, 1999, p. 9).

Best Value emphasised the production of "meaningful and robust information" for local people to judge council services (SO, BVD, 1997, p. 3; COSLA, BVD, 1999). This obligation to place constituent interests as central to service delivery and assessment paralleled similar requirements for arts organisations to develop and account for new audiences within their work (chapter four). Transparency, which an arts officer admitted CEC and SAC lacked, was key to this (Appendix, 11, M). At a conference David Evans, director of Leisure, City and County of Swansea, stated that, "CCT was kids' stuff compared to this, Best Value is the biggest intellectual challenge I've ever had. It is a lot of work".<sup>9</sup> Having "been in retreat for years", a CEC arts officer regarded Best Value as part of a growing interest in management systems within local government (Appendix, 37, C).

Having established a Best Value Task Force in July 1997 (COSLA, BVD, 1997), councils were given a three-year implementation period in which to develop and adopt Best Value frameworks. Although a legal duty in England and Wales, "Best Value in Scotland has been carried out voluntarily" (COSLA, BVD, 1999, p. 16). From 1 April 2000 all local authorities in Britain had a duty to apply Best Value to all services, including funding to third parties which incorporated grant giving for the arts. The initiative rapidly became pervasive across the entire public sector. In the words of one conference delegate, "You can't resist Best Value. There is no option, if you do [resist] you will sink".<sup>10</sup> The Corporate Services Department at CEC were assigned the task of drawing up the council's Best Value submission to government between September to March 1998 (Appendix, 45, M). The submission was approved and CEC were subsequently selected to pilot one of the first Best Value exercises in Scotland. From April 1999, arts officers expected funded organisations to adopt Best Value as part of their conditions of award, and this was later extended to

<sup>9</sup> 'Best Value: An Overview', David Evans, *Arts 2000: Best Value in the Arts*, conference organised by ILAM, Manchester, 28 March 2000.

<sup>10</sup> *Arts 2000: Best Value in the Arts*, conference organised by ILAM, Manchester, 28 March 2000.

all council clients in 2000 (CEC, FD, 2000d). Four key principles underpinned the initiative were: accountability to citizens, transparency of decision making, continuous improvement of services, and ownership by all stakeholders (COSLA, BVD, 1999). Best Value was designed to establish a more rigorous approach to assessing performance in local government and was “supported by systems and audit techniques which assess cost, quality, standards and performance measures” (SO, BVD, 1997, p. 3). This was an exercise in “the production of certainty”, and its communication to others (Latour, 1999, p. 30). Habermas would regard it as a “search for truth through rational communication”, an attempt to forge a common language or an ideal speech community (Thompson, 2001, p. 97).

Performance information was “an essential part of the overall regime” (COSLA, BVD, 1999, p. 8). The government’s modernisation effort was reliant upon the production of transferable evaluation data.

Best Value will mean local authorities redistributing resources - from services which do not give Best Value to those which do... The arts service will need to show that it is answering needs; playing a part in ensuring the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area; helping to address the ‘cross-cutting’ issues; and working in partnership with other departments and agencies. By giving Best Value - and by showing they do give Best Value - arts services can survive and flourish (ACE, BVD, 1999, p. 1).

Best Value focused on outcomes for service users rather than methods of service delivery, giving no commitment to direct service delivery by councils unless they were able to provide the best service in competition with other potential suppliers.

All local authorities in Britain were quickly brought under the jurisdiction of the Best Value regime, and all operations were judged by the standards it adhered to.

Correspondingly, CEC funded organisations were also instructed to adopt new forms of validation and to conform to Best Value principles. Greater emphasis was placed on setting comparable standards across the sector which encouraged organisations to compete for contracts and funding to provide the most effective service. Funded organisations were obliged to set clear targets through their funding agreements, and

they were subject to rigorous accountability procedures. Success was measured according to quantifiable outcomes -- such as the number of exhibitions -- and funded organisations were encouraged to assess their practice in terms of clear performance indicators. Best Value emphasised the instrumental value of the arts, and in particular, the sector's capacity to address cross cutting issues such as health, community safety, social exclusion, and regeneration (ACE, BVD, 1999).

The use of benchmarking and performance indicators proved to be "the most time consuming elements of the Best Value performance management framework" (ACE, BVD, 1999, p. 2). Local authorities were urged to formalise, codify and standardise existing evaluation practices (ACE, BVD, 1999; DETR, GD, 1998). From a Foucauldian perspective, such developments have their roots in the mid sixteenth century and concerns of how to introduce order into social life. As society became a political target and a quantity to be analysed and measured, so statistics developed into the science of the state. This new political rationality deployed technologies of normalisation to serialise, classify and control "anomalies" around purportedly impartial techniques (Rabinow, 1986, p. 16). Foucault argues that this power affects distributions around the norm, an apt metaphor for the development of performance evaluation within the CEC arts funding process. The requirement to systematise success and control anomalies compelled arts officers to develop the competitive/evaluative aspect of Best Value through a related benchmarking initiative. The initiative was designed to: "clarify what we're doing, to help persuade politicians of the value of the arts, to help expand our understanding about social inclusion as involving more than just poverty, and to find ways of linking the arts to a wider social inclusion programme" (arts officer, Appendix, 121, C). By agreeing a number of shared performance indicators, arts services could be assessed against each other, and their ability to deliver the social inclusion agenda in particular, could be compared with other service areas. In collaboration with SAC and other councils in Scotland, the Arts Development Unit launched the Benchmarking the Arts in Scotland initiative in 1999 (CEC, BD, 1998e, 1999). Inspired by a similar scheme in Australia (The Australian Local Government Association, BD, 1997), officers hoped the initiative would attain a more representative balance between quantitative and qualitative modes of accounting: "We're trying to develop collaborative benchmarking, not

competitive benchmarking as Best Value tends to do it. To develop a more qualitative account away from the quantitative accounts of the SAC” (arts officer, Appendix, 11, M).

By attempting to devise a more sympathetic evaluation framework, officers utilised “humanist categories designed specifically to take the force and the harm out of them” (Donoghue, 1983, p. 114). Having established an internal Best Value mechanism, councils were encouraged to take part in the initiative in order to establish nationally agreed performance indicators from these benchmarks. A background document explained that: “The aim of this project is to produce a framework which will assist Scottish councils in this process of measuring and monitoring the performance of arts services, and benchmarking an agreed set of performance indicators, with other councils in a collaborative and supportive way” (CEC. BD, 1999m, p. 2). The CEC commissioned the Scottish Local Government Information Unit [hereafter SLGIU] to manage and report on the process (SLGIU, BD, 1999a). In an initial paper SLGIU argued that: “It is imperative that performance indicators for the arts try to quantify/measure the social impact of the arts. In other words how to deal with qualitative issues in quantitative terms” (SLGIU, BD, 1999b). The group of 12 partner councils, the SLGIU, and the SAC attended a workshop in June 1999 (CEC, BD, 1999n).<sup>11</sup> Using a method called process benchmarking they agreed an initial thirteen general performance indicators to quantify and assess performance across all arts services in Scotland. The thirteen indicators were grouped under three overall themes adopted from the Government’s own Best Value framework (CEC, BD, 1999m, pp. 3-4):

1. Customer/Citizen Focus
2. Sound Financial Management and Financial Perspective
3. Sound Strategic and Operational Management and Internal Process Process

The group considered three areas -- audiences, finance and management -- to be the most important elements to highlight and monitor from council run arts services. The thirteen performance indicators emphasised the need to ensure arts services provided

<sup>11</sup> *Benchmarking The Arts in Scotland Workshop*, conference organised by CEC, Edinburgh Festival Theatre, Edinburgh, 4 June 1999.



evidence of (CEC, BD, 1999m, pp. 3-4):

- a) *Customer/Citizen Focus*
  - a strategic approach to the arts
  - meeting public needs/aspirations
  - a commitment to equal opportunities and providing access
  - meeting cultural objectives, in particular, helping to create high quality arts experiences
  - the economic impact of arts strategies
  - the social impact of arts strategies
- b) *Sound Financial Management and Financial Perspective*
  - assessing cost effectiveness
  - maximising support and involvement by all public agencies and the business sector
- c) *Sound Strategic and Operational Management and Internal Process Perspective*
  - a degree of 'market penetration'/effectiveness of service provision
  - assessing the efficiency of management of venues
  - assessing the effectiveness of grants and grant making procedures
  - assessing the effectiveness of support and advice services
  - effective and productive partnerships with external agencies

A further 25 indicators were arranged under the thirteen performance indicators, of which, revealingly, only one was specifically directed towards aesthetic concerns (CEC, BD, 1999m, p. 3). These indicators provide real insight into local government priorities for arts development across Scotland. The shift from aesthetic to utilitarian concerns such as social and economic impacts is stark, as is the emphasis on strategic development, operational efficiency, managerial effectiveness, and partnerships (cross-sectoral and public/private). In the next section I examine the implications of this reductive view of art as quantifiable on autonomous ideals of art as immeasurable.

### **Arts officers: Measuring the immeasurable**

The call for accountability represented by Best Value threatened to further shift power away from specialist arts officers into the hands of politicians and accountants operating at a higher strategic level. As Evans stated, "there is a danger of it [Best Value] being hijacked by accountants and lawyers, but we've got to try ... The audit

commission is going to audit everything, and our audit bill is £80,000 and we reckon it will double next year".<sup>12</sup> The Benchmarking for the Arts in Scotland initiative was therefore intended to combat potential political interference and curb the actions of the Corporate Services Department and empower arts officers to design, prove and assert their own criteria for measuring performance and value in the arts: "[I] think [the Scottish] parliament will want to introduce some performance indicators on how art is delivered and its effects, so [we're] trying to put [our] foot in the door before it's imposed on us" (arts officer, Appendix, 35, CM).

The initiative was regarded by those involved as a necessary intervention into methods of assessment and legitimacy. It was also deliberately articulated using politically salient language to keep favour with government. In their Corporate Funding Guidelines COSLA had proposed councils should develop a corporate approach to grant giving and assessment (Appendix, 71, GO). In response, Benchmarking for the Arts in Scotland established an extremely narrow and quantifiable set of performance indicators to be applied uniformly across grant-awarding departments in Scotland. Given this, the exercise was of particular interest as it explicitly set out to capture, measure and articulate value and performance within the arts. It represented a significant step towards the adoption of a uniform language and system of accountability which was more strongly weighted towards reflecting evolving political and administrative interests than internally generated artistic values or operational conventions. This not only had implications for the balance between art and administration within cultural life. If adopted, it would introduce a normalised system of values which would undermine institutional and geographical specificity. As politicians had done to them, arts administrators were attempting to assume discursive authority over their clients, using accountability procedures to make artists answerable to administrative priorities and not arts-specific concerns. Importantly, the array of evaluation measures adopted by funding agents began to alter ideas about art from a non-aligned and ephemeral entity into a quantifiable and measurable commodity to be managed as an equivalent form of public service. This shift in the means through which artistic practice was justified was seized on by CEC and SAC officers as an opportunity to align the arts alongside

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<sup>12</sup> *Arts 2000: Best Value in the Arts*, conference organised by ILAM, Manchester, 28 March 2000.

new developmental ideals whilst also ensuring active involvement in shaping the agenda for the arts as it emerged. By objectifying, categorising and accounting for art in such ways, officers were able to reframe the category into an appraisal discourse which neatly served their own immediate purposes. Conversely, the flexibility of the concept 'art' was exploited to project a series of concrete effects, rewards and benefits. The elusive quality of the artistic concept was therefore precisely what allowed for its colonisation and manipulation by different actors simultaneously. The Benchmarking for the Arts in Scotland initiative continued to develop over time, and in March 2001 I was given a copy of a national benchmarking pilot which had been developed by the group (CEC, BD, 2001d). Whilst writing up this thesis I was also made aware of a similar initiative being developed by the Scottish Executive Arts and Cultural Heritage Division, a fact which indicates the extent to which the benchmarking concept had attained national recognition and government commitment. The adoption and promotion of more demanding assessment procedures went a long way towards naturalising the notion that value in the arts could be quantified, and that artistic activity could also be conceived within, and motivated by, pre-established social and political requirements.

I have shown how whilst arts officers attempted to dehumanise grant-awarding processes, artists constantly foregrounded the human aspects of their art-making activities. Apparently drained of human frailty, arts administration aspired towards a neutrality of contact and conduct which was in many ways antithetical to all that art represented. Artists regarded administrators as betraying the basic principles of the trade: "Certainly, many artists believe the arts are fundamentally different from other aspects of production and public service and that they should not be subject to the same types and methods of evaluation ... For a long time, artists expected to be, and were indeed treated differently from other government provisions" (Cohen and Pate, 2000, pp. 6/9). This romantic view of creativity and artistic value had, however, become increasingly out-of-step with government and funding agencies' attitudes towards art. In accordance with the free marketeers, an emerging consensus in the political left held that "It is wrong to posit artistic practice as somehow entirely different from any other kinds of human practice" (Wolff, 1993, p. 3). It was argued as a result, that the administration of art should have the same equivalence as the

administration of other types of public services. Worpole, for instance, suggests that procedures such as fairness, public accountability and justice were as important as artistic freedoms, and maintains that art should not be immune from a civic concern for public accountability.

This engagement is part of a wider cultural dilemma of our times, notably in reconciling individual liberties and lifestyles (with their increasingly disruptive public externalities) with the need to retain some notion of a public domain of agreed common goods and procedures. The conflict between private choice and public goods (Worpole, 2000, p. 67).

The modernisation of local government, driven by effective management, accountability and evaluation principles, empowered the administrative turn in public arts management. The politicisation of art (chapter five) was accompanied by its bureaucratisation. The role of art objects themselves is important here, as attitudes towards the effectiveness of arts services were not just driven by the changing political climate, but were also actively influenced by evolving aesthetic conventions and public/political responses to these. Influential art critic Harold Rosenberg (in Donoghue, 1983) argued that when art objects no longer conform to an explicit logic of production, their arbitrariness disables criticism. Donoghue referred to this development over the last two hundred years as the “revolt against reason” (Donoghue, 1983, p. 105), the result of which was to throw both art and criticism into crisis. Chapter three explored the aesthetic consequences of this. The quantification trend within arts management can also, however, be seen as a return to reason within an increasingly critically insecure age, both politically and aesthetically. By undermining accepted aesthetic norms and rules and continually repelling the advancement of managerial reason Rosenberg’s “anxious object” had thrown politicians and administrators into a state of anxiety (in Donoghue, 1983, p. 98). This anxiety was not necessarily “about the status of the object, as about our helplessness in its vicinity. It is dismal to feel that our mind is disabled” (Donoghue, 1983, p. 110). Frustrated by their own inability to quantify arts services arts administrators determined to impose order onto the creative chaos operating around them. One officer was intent on rooting out any complacency among arts organisations about the need to account for their activities, remarking that “There’s a comfort zone, a major

comfort zone. People have had money for ten years and they expect it to carry on. To me it's like the emperor's new clothes, and the minute you scratch the surface it's just a front" (Appendix, 181, P). Officers reasoned that it was their job to measure the effectiveness of artistic provision using performance indicators rather than aesthetic or anecdotal evidence. Unable to command unquestioned respect as creators or critic connoisseurs, the professional credibility of artists became contingent upon developing new means through which to evaluate their activities (Matarasso, 1997): "we have to improve the status of artists in our community and change the often negative perception of contemporary visual art" (Jackson, SAC, PR, 1999f).<sup>13</sup> The quantification trend in the arts was therefore in part born from distrust of artists.

Political and public anxiety about the value of art spurred pragmatists such as Ian Christie to call for constructive dialogue between artistic and managerial imperatives. Christie held that "resisting accountability just has no future" (Appendix, 94, S). Art, he reflected, could no longer escape political scrutiny and, therefore, the only option was to start "seizing the agenda of accountability". He advised that the "language of accountability will demand statistics, and finding the language of accountability will help marshal the arguments [you] want to make". Arts officers thus attempted to dispel political anxiety about art by domesticating its causes and the values attached to these. As with Donoghue's (1983) humanist categories, by so doing they hoped to take the force and the harm out of art, and thus to consolidate its power and professional standing in relation to it. Although compelled to engage with the accountability agenda, not least in response to Best Value, some officers remained ambiguous about the effectiveness of ambitious evaluation regimes in practice. Despite being heavily involved with Best Value as a representative of the Local Government Association on the Arts Council of England's Best Value board, the following extract from a speech by David Evans illustrates this reticence.<sup>14</sup>

Can I conclude by telling you a true story about performance review when it is applied in the wrong way. In the past I worked for a Local Authority where the Management Services responsibility was part of the Chief Executive's Division. The Chief Executive, as you would expect, received

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<sup>13</sup> Tessa Jackson, SAC director.

<sup>14</sup> 'Best Value: An Overview', David Evans, *Arts 2000: Best Value in the Arts*, conference organised by ILAM, Manchester, 28 March 2000.



invitations to all sorts of functions, one of which he couldn't accept was to a concert and he handed this invitation down to his Head of Management Services.

The main piece of the concert was Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, and being a good Local Government Officer, he felt it appropriate to report back on the Monday morning to his superior on his attendance. I will now quote directly from the memoranda he wrote to the Chief Executive:

1. For considerable periods the four oboe players had nothing to do, now their numbers should be reduced and their work should be spread over the whole of the orchestra, thus eliminating peaks of inactivity.
2. All the violins were playing identical notes, this appeared to me to be an unnecessary duplication and the staff of the section could be drastically cut. If a large sound is what is important then an electronic amplifier could be substituted.
3. A significant amount of effort was absorbed in the playing of demi-semi-quavers, that appears to be an excess refinement and I would recommend that all notes should be rounded up to the nearest semi-quaver. If this were done it would be possible to use trainees or lower grade staff.
4. No useful purpose appeared to be served by repeating with horns the passage that had already been played by the strings, and if all such redundant passages were eliminated the concert could be reduced from 2 hours to twenty minutes.

If Schubert had attended to these matters as I have suggested he probably would have been able to finish the symphony after all. In conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed the concert and thank you for passing me the invitation.

Evans' tale encapsulates the uneasy reconciliation local government officers sought between art and accountancy. An ambiguity which was shared by other administrators, one of whom told me that "[You] can actually destroy creativity by putting it into a structure that's not about creativity at all" (Appendix, 121, M). Again officers appear to embody contradictory inclinations. These findings expose a failing Calhoun identified within Bourdieu's work as an inability to theorise contradiction and internal fractions, and consequently, to appreciate fluid notions of

class and cultural identity (cited in Fowler, 1998). Brighton (2000) drew attention to the Kantian foundations of the philosophical supposition that art cannot be evaluated adequately by reason or morality. The belief in the aesthetic as a distinctive domain, which had originally informed Maynard Keynes' formation of the Arts Council, continued to maintain its magnetism in Edinburgh, even at an administrative level. Having examined the character and effects of three modernising paradigms on arts administration/administrators, I complete my examination of the grant-awarding process by looking at the manner in which these modernising initiatives were received by artists and arts organisations. By so doing I show how the government's modernising agenda related to the autonomy of art discourse, exacerbating underlying tensions between administration (as calculation) and art (as immeasurable).

### **Art versus administration: An unclear boundary**

Artists and arts managers were aware of a breakdown in trust between themselves and the public. I recorded the following exchange at a conference hosted by the Edinburgh Sculpture Trust:

Audience member	It comes from a lack of trust between artist and society, and [this] is particularly bad in Scotland. [The] lack of trust [the] public has with [the] artist. Initial hostility is because of [the] label 'artist', and [this] takes time to break down. I was asked what food I ate as an artist on a radio programme recently, as if I would eat something differently.
Art teacher	[The] administration system is as bad at not respecting the artist as the public are. It is about trust (Appendix I, 122, CP).

They were, however, divided about how to respond to the accountability edict. Some argued for the view that "we need statistics about how art is good for our health" (conference delegate, Appendix 102, CP). Others opposed reducing creativity to performance indicators which could not account for its subtle effects:<sup>15</sup> "I don't believe people who haven't got their heart and souls in our industry will ever be able

<sup>15</sup> 'Measuring the Performance of Arts Development', Michael Trickey, Director of Policy and Planning, Arts Council of Wales, *Arts Development - The Pathway to Opportunity and Excellence*, conference organised by ILAM, Swallow Hotel, Glasgow, 9 October 1997.

to evaluate what we do. They can measure how many bins we empty and produce figures, but they'll never be able to get under the skin of what we do" (managing director, Apollo's Theatre Division).<sup>16</sup> Funding agents were accused of using "inappropriate criteria for [the] evaluation of visual arts projects, for instance audience numbers and popular appeal" (Cohen and Pate, 2000, p. 1). Many artists felt that instrumental evaluation techniques did not take into account the "the true breadth of their work" (Cohen and Pate, 2000, p. 1) (Appendix, 66, CM). Clark stated that "one reason why distrust *legitimately* exists between artists and administrators: the artists know the criteria which is used to exclude them is politically motivated and biased towards spurious government endeavours and incoherent and coercive marketing theories. This is destroying our culture not sustaining it" (Clark, 2001a, p. 3).

Artists also resisted attempts to extract equivalent outcomes from the arts and other areas of production arguing that "you can't measure visual arts in business terms" (Appendix, 116, CP). Broadcaster and writer David Stenhouse argued that "Art is by nature unpredictable, mutable and non-rational and it isn't made by Arts policy makers" (Stenhouse, 1996, p. 3). The elusive and unpredictable nature of artistic outcomes was valued by critics and artists alike, an ideal which corresponds with Pollock's (1982) suggestion that art is represented as an ideal of self-fulfilling individual creativity within bourgeois art history. According to Donoghue, this commitment to the detachment of art from reason is related to the "ancient tradition in which the artist is associated with divine madness, inspiration, enthusiasm, and ecstasy" (Donoghue, 1983, p. 104).

Figures such as John Tusa argued that capitulating to the accountability agenda was tantamount to degrading the real value of art by submitting it to exaggerated expectations it could not fulfil:

The arts already stand naked and without defence in a world where what cannot be measured is not valued; where what cannot be predicted will not be risked; where what cannot be controlled will not be permitted; where what

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<sup>16</sup> 'Partnerships' workshop, Sam Shrouder, *Arts 2000: Best Value in the Arts*, conference organised by ILAM, Manchester, 28 March 2000.

cannot deliver a forecast outcome is not undertaken; where what does not belong to all will be allowed to none (Tusa, 1999, p. n.p).

Artists in Edinburgh primarily regarded prescriptive goals and perceived over regulation as deadening creative development: "Ultimately government interference, all the criteria and control, makes people reluctant to be honestly creative. It is impersonal. It kills real art, real freedom of expression of the reality of our lives: it makes people frightened to be creative" (Clark, 2001b, p. 21). The bureaucratisation of the arts was seen to threaten artistic interests and freedoms (Kane, 2001) (Appendix, 112, PF, 18, M): "I became so absorbed by administration [that it] is hard to put time into what the artists need. Plus funding is so small" (curator, Appendix, 130, C).

Adorno (1991) claims that the two realms of culture and administration rest on antithetical norms which prevents dissolution of the tension between them. He suggests that "culture might be precisely that condition that excludes a mentality capable of measuring it" (Adorno in Bennett, 1998, p. 196). Adorno thereby establishes the aesthetic realm as inherently immeasurable in contrast to the requirements of bureaucratic quantification and evaluation. The cultural institutions Adorno refers to receive their mandate from the general public and their administration is somewhat dependent on remaining true to public values. In contrast, public arts organisations in Edinburgh are required to demonstrate commitment to an increasingly prescriptive political and managerial order whilst also endeavouring to preserve their own operational autonomy and artistic integrity. My research has shown the resulting negotiations between funded organisations and arts officers over performance evaluation to be interesting, as each actor attempts to forge a productive solution which ensures acceptable survival. For Thompson:

The best that could be hoped for in the form of policy for cultural administration ... is one that respects the specific content of the activities it would administer, based on a self-conscious recognition of the contradiction inherent in applying planning to a field of practices which stand opposed to planning in their innermost substance" (Thompson, 2001, p. 595).

The "precarious armistice" identified between the arts and society has its parallel in

Edinburgh in the antipathy between practice and administration, and correspondingly, between artists/managers and arts officers (Hauser, 1982, p. 540). There is an uneasy armistice, and considerable tension generated around the conditions attached to funding awards. For example, the SALVO Newsletter reported that, "When the recently ejected SAC director made clear in a recent bulletin that her remit was to 'shape the arts', it read as a declaration of war" (SALVO, GD, 2002, p. 1). Commenting in my field notes on this almost palpable animus, I observed that some arts officers seemed to regard artists and managers "as an irritant within the arts development process" (Appendix, 76, IN). This suspicion was dramatically reinforced by an arts consultant who thought certain arts officers "despised" their arts clients seeing them as a nuisance to be disciplined, reformed and removed.<sup>17</sup> Open hostility was sometimes expressed towards arts officers and their activities - "with the Directors of most of our leading artistic institutions now making the claim - the accusation - that the state is undermining their authority with fascist means" (Clark, 2001b, p. 22). Hostilities could be highly individualised. When discussing a funding application one gallery manager exclaimed that:

God I hate that woman, she's such a bitch, I hate administrators. She could have said okay hand it [funding application] in on Monday. We've worked like dogs on the two [XXX] bids and we only have two staff, and she won't let us off a couple of days as she said her assistant has to type the forms in. ... [We] can only apply to one [XXX] fund a year as a revenue client. [We] won't get it though as she hates me (Appendix, 79, C).

This outburst was not untypical, and simmering resentment was directed towards apparently inflexible bureaucratic systems and individual officers perceived to be particularly unsympathetic.<sup>18</sup> Hostilities were exacerbated by the intense familiarity of the Edinburgh arts network, where everyone appeared to know about everyone else. Consequently, arts administration did not function as a faceless bureaucracy but a highly personalised system of exchange.

Despite officers' best intentions, therefore, the aesthetic autonomy discourse

<sup>17</sup> Telephone conversation, 15 July 2001.

<sup>18</sup> My findings contradict SAC research which concluded that "Overall, SAC is widely perceived as being 'welcoming', 'helpful' and 'efficient' and, to a lesser extent, 'open' and 'inclusive'". The majority of respondents also felt the organisation was "objective and fair in its dealings" (SAC, 2001b, p. 3).



continues to resist the definitions and codifying which are the very purpose of administration, refusing to be incorporated into the normative bias and utilitarian requirements of public funding agencies. Autonomous concepts of culture were set against administrative imperatives. As a case in point, one artist protested that “Art [is] looked at as [a] commodity, even the skill of it. It’s become a commodity” (Appendix, 102, CP). This position echoes Bourdieu’s distinction between “art-as-commodity” and “art-as-pure-signification” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 114). Accustomed to the commodification of popular culture, artists still strive to protect their work from commercial and bureaucratic reductionism, so preserving its symbolic purity (chapter four). In such a way, the Best Value and Benchmarking initiatives exacerbated what Adorno called the irreconcilable tension between “the aesthetic realm and the requirements of bureaucratic calculation” (Adorno in Bennett, 1998, p. 196).

In its submission to the national cultural strategy consultation, NGoS cautioned that: “Scotland must guard against the creation of large bureaucratic structures that are likely to prove unwieldy, swallowing up monies that could otherwise be spent where most needed, for the greater education and pleasure of the public” (NGoS, GD, 1999, p. 12). For objectors, “the roads to Rome seem to have become more important than Rome itself” (Curtis, 2000, p. 101). As Peacock pointed out, the “salaries, administration and communication costs of the SAC are budgeted at £4.6 million, are three times the amount allocated to literature. Some of this work could easily be outsourced” (Peacock, 2001, p. 41). Frustrated by unwieldy management mechanisms, a CEC officer told me that “there are too many committees, and too much bureaucracy. Reports go round and round to about eight committees before a decision is made” (Appendix, 83, M). McRobbie (1998) referred to this as the over-institutionalisation of the field. Funding agencies were self-conscious about bureaucratic excess, recognising that it was a political embarrassment. In response to an artist who stated that “You do have to jump through hoops and the bureaucracy is insane, but most people take it as given”, the director of visual arts, SAC, replied that, “We know [there] is too much bureaucracy, SAC know [this] more than anyone” (Appendix, 112, PF). Arts officers were often critically self-aware, and another administrator told me that: “Too much money in [the] arts goes to bureaucracy, paperwork and bumph, yet another policy document. Members [arts

organisations] complain about it all the time. [There is] too much machinery and not enough action ... Lots of people [are] making money off [the] back of [the] arts, [and] taking away money to put into practice” (Appendix, 142, M). Attaining an acceptable balance between necessary and excessive support structures has long been an issue within the arts. Luke Rittner, one-time director of the ACGB, admitted that “The demands we made on client organisations became more and more complex and time consuming. I see now how bureaucracy went berserk” (Rittner in Witts, 1998, p. 487). Criticism about the self-perpetuating nature of administration is not, therefore, confined to artists and managers, but exists as an internal conflict within funding agencies.

As bureaucratic ciphers, arts officers seemed simultaneously to revel in, but also be trapped by their procedural creations (Born, 1995). Creativity was associated with what one conference delegate called the “freedom to express” (Appendix, 57, CM), whereas administrators were not perceived to be free, and therefore, their work was uncreative. As a result, arts management could actively work against the production of art. Speaking about this, an arts administrator admitted that, “[You] can actually destroy creativity by putting it into a structure that’s not about creativity at all” (Appendix, 18, M). Similarly, one artist declared that “Sometimes policy kills the artist” (Appendix, 79, C). Artists also complained that officers were incapable of responding to artistic values, working as pawns to an excessive regime which valued quantification above artistic concerns: “Money goes up the way but how much ever goes down to the artist?” (artist, Appendix, 79, C). Further I was told that “What [we] have is thousands and thousands of administrators but [I’m] not sure [we] have constructive support for artists” (curator, Appendix, 17, M). It was implied that while art serves a larger purpose, administration feeds off artistic talent to further its own professional interests (Tregaskis, 2001). When discussing arts administration, MSP candidate Donald Gorrie joked that “[I’m] not actually saying bureaucrats should all be shot at dawn on an empty stomach, but it would save a lot of money” (Appendix, 12, S). Still smarting from political criticism about its administration costs, the SAC launched *Creative Scotland*, a high profile award designed to reward the nation’s most valued artists. Opinion about funding agencies’ preference for administration rather than artists was not consistent, and the SAC was also praised

for its grants to individual artists (Appendix, 66, CM). Structures and schemes which directly facilitated the unencumbered interaction between artist and object were strongly supported as rare examples of responsible and effective arts administration (Appendix, 66, CM).

Practical engagement with art work therefore functioned as an important signifier of status, particularly given nervousness about the bureaucratisation of art. Artists promoted themselves and their own creativity as the highest source of authority. Many forms of interference were regarded as accelerating the slow demise of unblemished creativity. A Latourian language of separations was deployed which denoted purity from distortion, freedom from neglect. For instance, artist-run initiatives declared the authenticity of their own account above those galleries seen as having capitulated to administrative, bureaucratic and political interests. Artists and their art were established as bounded objects, more or less authentic and true to themselves depending on the particular constraints placed on them by the various systems of support and display they were engaged with (Appendix, 141, C). Authenticity of engagement was dependent on close proximity to artists and art work, and correspondingly, the maintenance of a critical distance from managerial and bureaucratic processes. One manager often prefaced his/her opinions by referring to 'our membership', or 'as an artist-run gallery' as a means through which to add authority and authenticity. As those with the most immediate involvement with producing art work, artists occupied a sanctified position -- although this only applied to those who individual gallery managers judged as good artists: "[Our] relationship with artists is absolutely essential, fundamental and basic. If we do not have artists we do not have funders, curators, et cetera" (gallery manager, Appendix, 75, HE). Similarly, Born (1995) argued that the institutional division of labour and social relations in IRCAM was stratified along hierarchical lines. She maintained that this differentiation which accorded higher status to artist producers as opposed to administrators, operated as a variant of the fundamental classificatory opposition of production and reproduction in modernist aesthetics. Unlike IRCAM, however, the Edinburgh arts network was not characterised by such highly-refined aesthetic distinctions. Consequently, the uneven stratification of production-administration was born from a more deep seated, but also unclear, opposition between art as

creative, and administration as uncreative.

I say this opposition was unclear, because lack of creativity was not confined to bureaucratic institutions but was also seen to exist within certain galleries themselves. By virtue of their active relationship with artists, for example, artist-run galleries were able to maintain the immediate currency of their own aesthetic and managerial integrity in comparison to the work emerging from the larger more impersonal institutions such as the Fruitmarket and national galleries: "Like at the Fruitmarket you're expected to do a talk for nothing and be grateful because you're an artist, and I think it's disgusting ... I'm happy to do this stuff but I'd like to feel that we're treated like professionals, otherwise we do all this stuff for free and it just breeds a culture of resentment" (artist, Appendix, 97, GO). Speaking about working as an exhibition assistant at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, another artist said "[I] just hated it. It is such a dead place. I thought I never want to work with this, it's so up it's own arse" (Appendix, 79, C). By virtue of their relative distance from 'real' creativity, these galleries and related managers and administrators were denied the same professional validity as more 'authentic' galleries and artists. Rather than being regarded as integral aspects of a wider production network, 'authentic' art/artists were perceived as existing beyond the institutional arrangements within which they were produced, and were thus allocated a significance based upon their separation from broader support. Both were seen to require protection from the meddling and potentially distorting affects of inappropriate institutional interventions. Similarly, whilst it is possible to see how knowledge about art, and involvement with it, was roughly arranged according to the following typology (Figure 19), the identity of each aspect was dependent on the other and was also cross-cut by internal contradictions and areas of commonality.

Figure 19: Artists and Administrators

<i>Artists/arts managers</i>	<i>Administrators/arts officers</i>
ingrained/spontaneous	learned/acquired
subjective/lived	objective/detached
compulsive	professional
embodied	cerebral
practical	intellectual
primary engagement	secondary engagement
authentic	parasitic
elusive	quantifiable
autonomous	accountable

Although unlikely to conform to all aspects of the typology in any one instance, one or more oppositions would be mobilised as part of the hostilities between actors. Legitimacy, and consequently space within the network was therefore allocated on the basis of identification with either arts practice or administration. While these discourses carried weight as individual ideals, and undoubtedly existed as rhetorical and symbolic flourishes, their application in practice was considerably less systematic or oppositional than was commonly implied. Arts policy, funding and evaluation criteria, for instance, no longer presented either artistic or administrative competence as a choice, but required funded organisations to absorb a multiple burden of expectations and to compete and justify themselves on a number of different levels. In addition, individuals also transgressed the codes of both creeds by maintaining sympathy with both positions. Notwithstanding these complications, the typology is important as it highlights how ideas about creativity, rationality, and administration worked as identification motifs within the arts network.

The productive outcome-oriented system espoused by the government, for instance, set intangible notions of pleasure and desire against the hard rewards provided by a highly quantified appreciation of artistic value. This attempt to create a rational basis for administering art was symptomatic of the value government placed on disinterested contemplation. As a result, arts officers attempted to measure culture “by norms not” regarded as “inherent to it and which have nothing to do with the quality of the object” (Adorno, 1991, p. 94). By marginalising the immanent quality



of the aesthetic, public funding agencies attempted to quantify the usefulness of the 'useless' object. In such a way government tried to regain control of Rosenberg's (in Donoghue, 1983) anxious object.

### **Funded organisations: Resisting accountability**

By reifying the terms of their own discourse, and connecting this to a claimed logic of development (Frascina and Harris, 1997), artists and managers had created the discursive context through which to secure their continued existence. The sector's ability to generate its own criteria for success was undermined by evaluation practices which cast doubt on its authority as authors of artistic value. Presented as the pursuit of high standards in public life, these interventions were experienced by some of the artists and arts managers I talked to as an attack on their cultural prerogative. One of the consequences of the accountability agenda was, therefore, a weakening of artistic authority. Government used state sanction to reconstitute long-standing notions of professional legitimacy along more managerial lines, dissolving the analytic distance between lay perceptions and the evaluations of experts, and consequently disabling their capacity to translate their judgements into material effect. Artists resisted the new professional identities and complained that it was no longer enough to simply be a good artist: they also had to be business minded, effective administrators, social workers, educators, and good fund-raisers. As an art lecturer pointed out, the modernist notion of the disconnected artist was breaking down (Appendix, 103, CP) (Hauser, 1968; Matarasso, 2000). Personally committed to defending professional autonomy, one gallery manager explained how she tried to protect artists from bureaucratic responsibilities: [We] need institutions [galleries], because I can take on the role of negotiating the funding game, artists don't and can't be involved in this. [There] is a need to advocate on behalf of artists" (Appendix, 15, M). One arts officer even conceded that "the system has devalued the individual" (Appendix, 44, M). Another officer admitted that "artists [are] in an unequal relationship with support agencies" (Appendix, 117, M). In addition to the evacuation of art, these officers bore witness to the marginalisation of artists themselves within the arts network -- "... at the moment artists are getting shafted by everyone" (gallery manager, Appendix, 75, HE).

Although artistic credibility depended on creative and operational autonomy, by virtue of their financial dependency, artists' ability to express themselves was unavoidably channelled through the state. Different institutional settings, and changes to the context in which art was managed thus made possible new multi-skilled artistic identities (Appendix, 102, CP). Consequently, singularity of description, function and purpose does not provide an adequate account of artistic identities: "[The] role of [the] artist has changed and [it] is now more multi skilled, and [this] is partly because of the way it is funded. The funding does affect the role of the artist" (artist-curator, Appendix, 66, CM, 77, M). Herein lies the uneasy contradiction at the heart of publicly-funded art as an autonomous ideal, its independence relied upon state sanction. This was evident from the following exchange:

Arts officer	Funding and the arts are inextricable ...
Art critic	[This] is one of the contradictions, and [it] is in the work, artists responding to the bureaucratic death that threatens us all (Appendix, 112, PF).

Speaking of Transmission Gallery in Glasgow, a curator pointed out that the more successful the gallery became the more it was cited by the SAC in its annual reports: "this is hard as then [you] have the involvement of the dead hand of bureaucracy" (Appendix, 75, HE). As Adorno (1991) conceded, despite claims to independence artistic producers cannot deselect themselves from processes of administration. Nevertheless, utilising splitting techniques (Born, 1995) similar to those practised by arts officers, artists in Edinburgh attempted to disassociate themselves from the administrative structures on which they were dependent. They were embarrassed by their own culpability: "If [you] want respect for [your] work, [you do] not want it to be seen as tied up with your private situation, i.e. that you're skint. This places you in a patronised situation especially [with] the power play between you and someone living off administratively your skintness" (Appendix, 112, PF). Edinburgh artists lived with the ambiguous affects of their collusion with government, precariously balanced between the contradictory need for public sanction and for professional autonomy, and their conflicting desire for the comforts and security which accompany professional recognition as well as the rewards derived from

creative spontaneity.<sup>19</sup> Quoting an artist, Cohen and Pate remarked that “we have become lost between hard business practice and individualistic artistic desire” (Cohen and Pate, 2000, p. 10). Artists were split (Born, 1995) between their self and public responsibilities:

The public funding criteria forces us to work in a certain way and it's like there is a certain criteria of funding that we've got to make sure that we can use that to the advantage of what we still want to do, and I think that's where you contribute, you've got to try and make it work ... But then hopefully we never do that in a way that will compromise either the artwork or the artist, but somehow we are maintaining those two positions and are moving forward together (gallery manager, Appendix, 133, PF).

Administrative prescriptions were not as systematic as they first appeared because they were neither ‘internally’ or ‘externally’ complete. When considered alongside the inconsistent way in which official policy was actually instituted, these moments of private resistance belie more pessimistic claims about the over-bearing power of the state. Administrative regimes and their effects were resisted and fractured. In this sense, despite its radical, and some would argue, principled intent, the council actually presided over an artistic field which somehow managed to maintain many of its privileges: “In a period of reactionary politics this is the criteria, and six months later, oh my God this is the new criteria, and we tweak the funding application but meanwhile I’m doing the same job. That’s political, and [the] SAC are worse for that public game” (gallery manager, Appendix, 15, C). Although organisations had considerable personal and professional investment in colluding with the new administrative paradigm, many invariably found ways around the restrictions it represented. The term ‘funding game’, which referred to the contortions undertaken by organisations to temporarily fit into funding criteria, attained common usage. One gallery even produced a generic check list of current funding priorities which it ensured it reflected in all applications submitted.<sup>20</sup> The following wry statement

<sup>19</sup> David Throsby outlined a hierarchy of wants in relation to artistic motivation, arguing that artists’ minimum income requirements and creative aspirations altered in relation to each other over the course of their career and in relation to their private circumstances. The balance between material and artistic rewards were constantly revisited, therefore (‘The Economics of Creativity: Economic and Cultural Value in the Working Lives of Artists’, key note speech at *The Long Run: Long-term Developments in the Arts and Cultural Industries*, Conference organised by Erasmus University, Rotterdam, 23-25 February 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Edinburgh Arts for Social Inclusion, gallery manager interview, Bleu, Edinburgh, 21 February 2001.

appeared in a editorial in *Variant* a Glasgow-based critical visual arts journal.

**A** is for Art

**B** is for Bureaucracy

**C** is for Cuts

The first in a series of essays designed to reach a younger audience purely to comply with funding criteria (Editorial, 2000, p. 3)

By learning to play the funding game satirised by *Variant*, organisations created the spaces through which to continue practising much as they ever had, while skilfully appearing to absolutely conform to the new responsibilities demanded of them. In conversation with an artist, she confessed that “[I] can’t believe the lies people tell to get funding, and how the work we do has got little to do with what we have to say it is” (Appendix, 72, HE, 116, CP). Another artist, observed with some admiration about their gallery manager partner: “XXX [gallery manager] works funding proposals around what they want to hear, she pushes all the buttons and knows what to say and she gets the money” (Appendix, 168, C). Authority, power and decision making capacity did not originate at any one identifiable point. Consequently, assumptions about domination and suppression cannot be unproblematically mapped onto the relationship between artists/arts organisations and funding agencies.

For example, the public-funding network which had allowed for the professionalisation of artists to continue in the twentieth century was further consolidated in Scotland with the formation of the Scottish Artists Union on 12 May 2001. Despite the fact that authenticity of voice was still attached to maintaining distance from bureaucratic interventions, the decision to establish a Scottish branch of the union is indicative of the extent to which artists are adapting to their own institutionalisation and integration into conventional employment structures (Appendix, 117, M, 157, CM). As one artist remarked, “We should stop doing things for free. We’re just making ourselves angry doing things for cheap. Artists should start valuing themselves. People don’t value us as we don’t have a market, but [we] must start to value ourselves” (artist, Appendix, 102, CP). Pate noted that

“most artists have a profoundly pragmatic approach to the maintenance of their livelihood” (Pate, 1998, p. ). In some instances then professionalisation and progressive exposure to the administrative state was gradually dissolving the autonomous ideologies which separated the arts from other public services. Equivalence of expectation was accompanied by a parallel loss of professional privilege for artists and gallery managers, most of whom found themselves progressively bearing the same responsibilities as other public servants (Fopp, 1997). Notwithstanding continued pockets and strategies of resistance, artistic activities were on balance therefore inexorably being integrated into wider government systems. The space between public art and bureaucratic and utilitarian functions was diminishing.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

The previous chapter made clear that political expectations about the social role and responsibility of the arts have multiplied. The artistic realm is no longer able to justify itself within the terms, language, artistic practices, operational directives, goals or methods of procurement upon which it had conventionally relied to attract public sector support (McGuigan, 1996). Arts organisations are expected to achieve tangible outcomes across a far wider spectrum of activities, including equal opportunities, access and interpretation, audience development, education and outreach, and artistic excellence, as well as more managerial concerns such as staff training, income generation, sponsorship, and sales and marketing.

This chapter has shown how this led to a tightening of funding criteria to reflect the wider modernisation of local government and accompanying strategic, accountability and evaluation requirements. The culture and practice of arts management in Edinburgh has been shown to be subject to rapid transformation. Pressure from government to instigate more accountable grant-awarding procedures exposed decision-making mechanisms to rigorous new auditing and accountability procedures. Heightened anticipation about what investment in the arts could and should deliver is accompanied by intensified bureaucratic activity surrounding grant giving, and by magnifying of related supplementary activities. There has been, for



instance, an exponential growth in the number of arts consultancy, fund-raising, and management positions providing advice on sponsorship, funding, feasibility studies, business plans and application procedures. Artists expressed resentment towards these professionals whose activities were regarded as self-serving, and to detract scarce resources away from arts practice into unnecessary administration.

The shift from closed to more open and accountable decision-making procedures had immediate implications for the control and ownership of these critical processes, and therefore, for the allocation of aesthetic value by existing professional elites.

Government attempts to reform and challenge the privileged status of art were therefore accompanied by a parallel critique of the role and function of arts officers as well as artists. Exposing arts officers to professional scrutiny, at least in theory, further undermined their standing as autonomous professional experts. The compulsion to quantify the value of public services also, however, gave officers a new sense of purpose and validity, and shifted their attentions from practice to the measurement of art. I have explored how these developments affected individual officers, revealing how they embraced both embraced and resisted the accountability agenda. By focusing on arts officers I have shown how the actions and preferences of individual subjects is critical to the operation of the overall arts network.

Despite this dramatic assertion of managerial muscle, older modes of cultural alliance, personal and class affiliations and the conventional networks through which particular art forms asserted their status, remained intact. Non-aligned forms of professional respect, measurement, and aesthetic identification were still prevalent. Indeed, in some instances, they were sufficiently persistent and deeply rooted to confound all attempts at reform. The annual funding round at the CEC was a fascinating performance of this interplay between new and aggressive forms of judgement, and more mature, assured, and socially bound systems of patronage. In part due to the convoluted personal and political nature of funding decisions, older systems of support and justification were robust despite attempts to subject them to rigorous new value systems backed up by performance indicators and political imperatives. As such, judgements about art, and the administrative systems through which these were instituted, were not autonomously or rationally made. Attempts to

impose order onto such processes and arrive at rational and scientific conclusions are, therefore, confounded by the anomalous, hybrid and unpredictable nature of decision-making practices themselves (Latour, 1993).

Although chapter five concluded that there were striking connections between Labour's general political vision and SAC/local government arts policies, this chapter indicates that there is not a direct causal relationship between statements of principle and actual administrative practices. Policies and procedures are conceived and implemented within operational contexts which defied clinical notions of cause and effect. Discursive influence was dispersed rather than didactic, and advanced in incomplete and arbitrary ways (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992). Internal contradictions defied attempts to impose order. Powerful lines of influence took form through the interplay between different emotional, social, personal, institutional, political, economic, and material circuits. Points of resistance, failure, unanticipated consequences, random and contrived elements were not simply rogue factors (Latour, 1993), but were as much part of public arts administration in Edinburgh as more consistent trends and occurrences. The apparently detached intentions of funding agencies were mediated through what one commentator has seen as:

failures and absurdities; with how people live with its operations and unforeseen consequences, and then with multiple mediations and refractions of their own responses; with how they formulate initiatives of their own; with how all this living 'exceeds' ... the demands and the desires of the policy imaginary (Morris cited in Barnett, 2001, p. 18).

Viewed in this holistic networked fashion, prescriptive statements about singular and unequivocal sources of power and influence are impossible to make. This concept of networked connections and flows, and the attendant blending of influential factors both discursive and material is key to understanding how the art world in Edinburgh was constructed and changed, and what it consisted of. Success was, in many senses based upon how well connected or embedded each actor was within the overall framework.

## **Examining Edinburgh's art world: Summary and conclusions**

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This thesis set out to investigate the character and function of visual art in Edinburgh and to understand the values and processes which underpin its practices. I have approached art in Edinburgh not simply as a physical object, but as a discursive and institutional process. I have attempted to uncover the conceptual maps which animate this process. The significance of art has not for me primarily resided in its material presence as objects -- although this is important, not just as a representation of mental structures but as an active force within the overall network -- but in the values and significance applied to it. I have argued that the meaning of art primarily lies in what we think about it and consequently how we produce and deal with it, and not in what it self-evidently appears to be. Without this social and institutional context we cannot name objects as art.

Aesthetic philosophy has emphasised the display and reception of works of art and not its production or how these conditions affect its status as an autonomous or instrumental phenomena. In contrast, I have concentrated on the contexts within which art in Edinburgh is produced, broadening our appreciation of what this conditioning environment consists of by drawing in concerns around funding and

management practices alongside more recognised factors such as artistic motivation and gallery contexts. I have argued that the art world can most effectively be understood as operating as a network. By so doing I have further extended institutional theories of art.

## **Method used**

In part motivated by intellectual curiosity and perceived weaknesses in previous approaches to the study of art, this research was also catalysed by unresolved personal concerns. I came to this work as both an aspiring academic and a slightly disillusioned arts development professional. This personal engagement with the research context has reinforced my contention that artistic development is a subjective exercise. By incorporating academic, professional and personal experience into this research I have argued that reference across different domains of knowledge adds rigour to research inquiry. I have also suggested that considerable benefits could accrue from more effective partnerships between academic and professional researchers. The theme of separations, whether epistemological, conceptual and material, or between art forms, the rational and irrational, and groups of professionals, has recurred throughout this thesis. So too have the connections between these separations. Combined with prior understandings about the field my reading of Latour and Foucault encouraged me to develop a methodology which allowed for the integration of factors rather than the creation of convenient but false separations between them. Importantly, I have advocated an approach to research which is inclusive and which traces the connections between diverse sources of influence.

Although I have explored three key discourses about art -- as autonomous, functional and quantifiable -- I have also upheld the agency of other material components within the arts network such as art works, money, materials, funding documents and policies. Following Latour, I maintain that the category 'art' is defined and asserted through a combination of discursive and material factors. Rather than offering an account which is purely institutional, cultural or materialistic, discursive, artistic or political, I have simultaneously considered the place and function of institutional

dialogues, artistic practices, aesthetic preferences, political interests, and strategic documentation. Policy documents, art works, personalities and organisational conventions have all been considered within this broad methodological approach. My research therefore differs from previous academic accounts of the art world as it incorporates excluded actors alongside more familiar research subjects. This approach could be replicated within diverse research contexts.

In this sense, my theoretical position, methodological approach and research findings all support the notion of visual arts practice as a cultural enterprise which is constituted through an integrated network of different influences and institutions. I have conceived of the art world as operating in a networked fashion. This network is animated through the relationships between different actors, whether these be individuals and institutions, material factors or discourses about art. This understanding has implications for the type of method used as it suggests that understandings about art are dependent upon accounting for a wide range of factors while also understanding what their relationships consist of. For example, I have argued that government and funding agencies are equally important influences within the Edinburgh arts network as artists. The exact nature of the relationship between patrons and arts organisations gives the Edinburgh art world its shape and direction. I have attempted to illuminate the varied character and dimensions of the art world by situating my research within the broader nexus of influences and effects which bring it into being.

There is correspondence between my method and Becker's (1982) conception of art as a collective enterprise, although I introduce a subjective dimension to my enquiry which Becker neglects. Interestingly, although the relevance of subjectivity is being widely recognised within the professional museum and gallery world, for instance through leadership development initiatives, parallel advances in feminist research (Bondi, 2002) have not translated effectively into the study of art. Nevertheless, I suggest subjectivity is an important determining factor within the publicly subsidised art world. I have also focused on discourses about art, showing how evolving notions of 'art' and its social function affect the type of work produced. Discourses of distinction are therefore a further means through which networks are constituted.



The integrated method I have developed is particularly demanding. It requires extended time in the field and close accounting, recording and examination of a wide number of variables. Analysis also benefits from reading across disciplines as well as subject areas. This is a labour intensive form of study, one which would benefit from a more decisive approach to differentiating useful from less relevant material than I was able to muster. HyperResearch did greatly relieve what was an onerous analytic challenge. Additionally, I could have drawn more effectively on advances in writing-up ethnographic material which might have made writing-up less lengthy.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, my belief in the art world as a collection of influences has been well served by an ethnographic method which encourages depth of appreciation while allowing for spontaneous movement across different contexts and the inclusion of diverse sources of data. As a result of repeated exposure to the field the significance of apparently incidental occurrences were able to emerge. In such a manner, the hierarchy between pre-disposed and emergent knowledge was flattened out. This method reveals how the field is composed of 'irregularities' as well as systematic structures.

### **Implications and principal issues reviewed**

My research suggests that the artistic field is driven by a continual search for new artistic functions, a process informed by different factors at different points in history. In Edinburgh in the late 1990s revived notions of cultural utility, the modernisation of local government and an abiding commitment to art as an autonomous entity were the principal political motors behind public art. The apparent neutrality of judgements about art, coupled with the conviction that art is and should remain autonomous, were mobilised as defences against the changing priorities of government and public funding agencies. As such, artistic autonomy is particularly vulnerable to government calls for a more integrated social and utilitarian agenda in the arts. This evolving dialogue between on the one hand art as pure and the demands and interests of public patrons on the other, is the main source of contention and catalyst for change within the subsidised sector. Although artistic autonomy has been explored as an aesthetic and philosophical concept, it has not

been taken into account as a significant driving force within the art world in institutional terms. Persistent pressure from government for art to become more socially integrated brought this value structure to the fore, a timely development which my research responded to.

The quest for creative freedom beyond the restraining arms of arts administrators, public funding and the mainstream gallery infrastructure has become one of the defining features of contemporary art in Britain throughout the 1990s. A remark from one artist struck me as particularly telling in this regard: "I feel like I constantly have to apologise for what I do. I'm sorry I've done this. Just because we have public subsidy, why should we compromise?" (artist, Appendix, 75, C). Is it possible, as my research implies, that art will become a marginal consideration within the art world? As one artist said, "Galleries exist for everything but the art" (Appendix, 113, IN). Are artists a disruptive influence on the orderly solitude of the gallery and will they increasingly find themselves unwanted strangers in their own institutions and spaces, reluctantly tolerated as the awkward but necessary basis upon which the rest of the profession depends? If so, artists' fate will mirror that of audiences whose general deportment and cultural digressions have been the focus of such concern. My research has shown that along with audiences they too have become subject to the governments corrective compulsions. The indications are that as long as artists are dependent upon public funding they will continue to attract controversy. With such a restricted private market and a dramatic decline in arts sponsorship by 24% in 2001/2 (Editorial, 2002, p. 1), this dependence is unlikely to change. Publicly funded art and artists will survive; however, my research suggests that the nature of their work will continue to alter. Further, by draining ideology from art, New Labour have secured generalised political consensus about its role and function which is unlikely to change from one government to another. At least in the foreseeable future.

My research has shown that artistic patronage is increasingly tied into prescriptive social expectations. It is evident that public subsidy has moved away from a model based on the fetishisation of the 'unique' art object to a model of appreciation based on active and tangible social outcomes. The 1990s have seen a return to a legislative role, with more direct targeting of resources towards strategic objectives, tighter

administration procedures and a more decisive role for government. This agenda is not, however, entirely autocratic but is accompanied by a continuing commitment to diversity as a developmental principle, echoing Bauman's portrait of the postmodern problem as securing the capacity to communicate understanding between cultures, as opposed to stressing the universal qualities of a superior culture and universal standards (Bauman 1992).<sup>1</sup> The shift back into a more explicit reforming and legislative position thus marks a fusion of previous ideals -- modern and postmodern, universal and relative -- rather than an abandonment of either. At different points in this historical cycle, although never completely absent, the reforming role of culture has gained more or less potency and visibility. It is, I contend, strongly evident again as an explicit ideological force within arts administration and the repercussions of this for both the practice of art as well as the identities of artists and arts managers has been examined.

Despite this, the confusing evolution of the frameworks through which rules and judgements about art are conceived has resulted in the uninitiated progressively abandoning the interpretation of art to the authority of those in the know. I have, therefore, questioned the democratic basis of much contemporary conceptual art, suggesting that despite its alternative pretensions it has tended to reinforce the territorial boundaries of the arts establishment, and concomitantly to alienate significant sections of the public. This loss of faith in the innate qualities of art and correspondingly in our capacity to assign value, has made institutional theories of art all the more potent. It has also placed more pressure on those consecrating institutions and individuals to direct our drifting responses. Without secure referents this task has become all the more precarious. Education, social justice (audience development) and tourism have recently been reinforced as clear Scottish Executive priorities for the cultural and heritage sector, for example (Watson, 2002). The SAC and local government will have to justify arts funding on the basis of who it educates, who takes part and how many visitors it attracts.

This thesis questions whether art as an autonomous entity will prove politically tenable. I was told, for example, that the CEC might replace core funding for arts

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<sup>1</sup> The celebration of diversity is not necessarily more progressive or less reforming when scrutinised more closely (Green, 1992, 2001).

organisations with project-based contracts designed to deliver agreed social outputs. On this basis public money would only be spent on art with a singular utilitarian purpose. Visual art has experienced something of a renaissance as a result of National Lottery investment and the yBa phenomena. Additionally, members of the increasingly pervasive and wealthy middle class are beginning to show an interest in purchasing contemporary art. This boom is also, however, threatened by the recent collapse in stock market values. The explosion of the dotcom bubble, the end of a round of corporate mergers, September 11th, high profile corporate fraud and pensions scandals, have diminished public trust in private companies. Concurrently, arts sponsorship has started to shift towards a preference for “‘corporate social responsibility’ benefits rather than the ‘corporate hospitality’ and brand building of years gone by” (Hill and Whitehead, 2002, p. 2). When combined with sustained political preference for work of a social nature, it is clear that art for its own sake is loosing both public and private commitment. The fortunes of art move with the wider fortunes of the bourgeoisie.

In this regard Bourdieu’s class-infused thesis retains some purchase. In other respects, however, my research has provided a more nuanced reading of taste as a social category, arguing that Bourdieu’s notion of class is too rigid and that artistic preferences are also intersected by (often deliberate) slippages between class groups as well as internally differentiated ideas about what art should consist of and the function it should perform. Concepts of autonomy and social utility operate as powerfully divergent principles in this respect. Class is present therefore, but its structural roots -- many artists have low incomes but high cultural capital -- and unifying principles are not as incontrovertible as previously assumed (Bennett, 1999).

As well as considering changes to the function of art I have also looked at how these alterations are secured. The cultural sector is particularly representative of claims made about government and economic modernisation processes in relation to: the progressive removal of statutory obligations and rise in private sector investment; increased monitoring of organisations; the rise in bureaucratic activity to manage the field; and the introduction of an audit culture and an internal market with

organisations competing on the basis of financial efficiency as well as product quality. In this regard, the role of local government as a leading patron of the arts has been pivotal in instigating these significant shifts in structure and process. Government and local government therefore must be recognised as integral actors in the co-operative network that creates and controls art (Becker, 1982). Rather than examine the root cause of claims made about modernisation processes (Beck, 1992; Latour, 1993) I looked at how these ideological and structural conflicts resulted in related changes in attitudes, behaviour, and arts management processes. Although arts policy and the Arts Councils have been the cause of academic concern, previous research has not looked at local government and arts officers, or considered their values and working practices. Aided by prior professional connections, I have been able to elaborate a detailed account of the activities and values of these actors.

Government power has become more invasive, extending into spaces previously immune to its penetration. The politicisation of the arts generally is indicative of broader alterations in government technology. The means through which bureaucrats assert the government's utilitarian agenda is, however, challenged by artists and arts managers' commitment to art as being separate from administration, free to follow its own creative impulses and with an internally generated sense of purpose. Of particular dispute is the development of new validation measures and performance criteria, which, I suggest, is viewed as imposing restrictive and reductive accounts onto what they claim is an essentially immeasurable, unpredictable, and self-governing media. The 'specialness' of art is threatened "in the light of manifold dependencies" (Ween and Callen, 1982, p. 335). Although still buoyant, there are some signs of resistance to the accountability agenda. The National Debate on School Education in Scotland held by the Scottish Executive in 2002 highlighted unrest around excessive performance measurement in schools.<sup>2</sup> Emphasis was also placed on enhancing cross-subject areas such as creativity within the 5-14 curriculum.<sup>3</sup> The attractiveness of creativity as an economic and social asset has become more widely recognised. If this, and reservations about performance evaluation, become more

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<sup>2</sup> 'National Debate on School Education in Scotland, organised by COSLA/Association of Directors of Education Scotland, Glasgow, 21 June 2002.

<sup>3</sup> 'RSA - Education Conference', organised by The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce, Stirling, 22 June 2002. Also, 'The National Debate on Education Event', organised by Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network, 28 June 2002.



officially recognised north of the border, the space for unrestrained creativity may open up.

Although an extra £61 billion was awarded to public services in the 2002 Comprehensive Spending Review, some of which may relieve pressure on arts funding, it is also clear that these rewards have to be accompanied by tight output targets. Local authorities, schools and hospitals will be punished if they do not deliver. I have argued that the financial rewards accrued from public sanction are perceived to carry definite costs in terms of artistic and operational autonomy. More realistically, therefore, it may come to the point where securing public patronage will actually engender greater compromises than operating independently or commercially, either in the manner of the private art market in America, or at a low level of subsistence within the 'alternative' field. For an increasing number of those seeking public subsidy therefore, the money might not be worth it. As one artist remarked about the New York arts scene, the "market keeps control away from the apparatchiks and opens up the system" (Appendix, 107, HE). Ironically, the promise of creative freedom appears to lie more with the market than with public patrons.

Although opposition to government, the market and the 'arts establishment' was vocally expressed among the contemporary artists I researched, clear boundaries between the different realms exist more in conceptual than in practical terms. Animosity fulfils, therefore, a symbolic function operating to project the idea of distinction rather more than actually creating impermeable barriers between different constituencies. This finding resonates with Latour's (1993) critique of false separations. The discourse of art as 'pure' is an example of how discursive ideals mobilise actors to undertake particular actions, such as defending the arms-length principle, which then changes the direction and shape of the network. Discourses create distinctions, the articulation of which creates the geometry of networks. Nevertheless, purity of conduct is more a necessary aspiration than a realistic possibility. Artists struggle to resolve this contradiction, aspiring towards ideals of practice and status which they daily compromise through their interactions with the state, the market and the art world itself. In fact, artists have never existed separately from these realms, although belief in their own creative autonomy is essential to

maintain the integrity of their work within the art market and in relation to art critics. Artists need the belief, desire and conviction in their own liberty to maintain their currency as artists, but they also need the support of the gallery infrastructure, funding institutions and the welfare state to survive as individuals. This contradictory existence is intrinsic to public art. The funding game extends to all involved in the production of art. Politics and art have never been separate, although their relationship is perhaps a little more honest now.

My research indicates that artists, managers and arts officers do not operate according to clear and coherent identities, as unbroken consensus did not exist within any individual or within each set of actors any more than, in contrast, consistent antagonism also existed between them. I therefore attempted to account for internal differentiation within rationalities (and groups of actors) as well as between them. Drawing on Born's (1995) notion of 'splitting', I addressed the contradictory levels of interest which are simultaneously accommodated within given individuals, a factor which is neglected within Foucault's own work on discursive practices and Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. This provided a theoretical basis for my observations about eclectic aesthetic interests and tastes and the personal and institutional disruptions involved with producing and administering contemporary art. It also highlighted how individuals undergo processes of denial in order to create and demonstrate commitment to 'unified' institutional ideals. Arts officers, for instance, constantly compromised personal preference for the political and administrative interests of the CEC. The seamless public image of the council therefore masks the contrary and incomplete identities through which it is actually composed. Again, internal differentiation upset assumptions about government and arts institutions as coherent enterprises. The Edinburgh arts network did not operate according to neatly opposed understandings, or coherent ideals and practices. It is within these spaces that many of the decisions about art actually occur. Correspondingly, by playing official against unofficial opinion, arts organisations will continue to eke out their living.

My research has emphasised the importance of subjectivity to government and artistic practices, a hitherto neglected area of research (Boyne, 2001). I have

proposed that arts officers, artists and arts managers operate as split personalities, simultaneously (and voluntarily) conforming to and resisting the discourses and operational conventions they are part of. Inherent to the network, this ambiguity helps to disperse power by dissolving the capacity for any one actor to monopolise others. Subjectivity and the resistant capacities of individuals and groups is, therefore, essential to maintaining diversity and balancing power within networks. Further, although the network is expressed through material agents, the tenor of individual opinion has proved most charismatic in my research. In a sense, while previous researchers have brought art works and then institutions into arts research, I have humanised this work without neglecting these other factors. This thesis is populated by individuals whose relationships with themselves, with others and with the institutions they are affiliated to, are complicated and difficult to grasp conceptually and methodologically. Although I have tried to do justice to this complexity by acknowledging rather than suppressing apparent anomalies, and communicating the intricacy of relationships, I remain concerned that perhaps this has not been achieved as thoroughly as possible. Notwithstanding this, it is also apparent that these insecurities are inherent to ethnographic research and that for all its advantages such work is inevitably intrusive. Consequently, research involves balancing one's own intellectual requirements and political principles alongside the trust others have invested in the integrity of the researcher. Negotiating this tension has proved one of the more difficult aspects of producing this thesis. I found that as a researcher I too embodied particular contradictions.

This theme has been reflected within my conception of art. My research has demonstrated in more particular ways how the category 'art' is a malleable quality. It adapts and expands responsively as it is deployed by government, the Scottish Executive, CEC, SAC, artists and arts managers to serve different strategic ends. It is apparent that aesthetic purpose and perceptions about the social role of art exist as movable rather than essential categories. Further, understandings about the role and value of art have become so open that those involved are able to reconcile apparently contradictory demands simultaneously. Achieving a balance between artistic excellence and access is a case in point. This is, however, an uneasy truce. The definition of art and the value applied to it shifts over time to serve the political,

economic and cultural needs of artists/arts managers, patrons and the art market. The various individuals, institutions and practices in the network are mobilised by the need to open up space for their particular ideas about the social function of art. As Fyfe surmised “the struggle for professional distinction is a long-one” (Fyfe, 2000, p. 13): “There is lots of division and competition as everyone [is] trying to fight [their] own corner. Things are getting insecure again” (arts administrator, Appendix, 18, M). Professional status is dependent on this ability to carve out space within the arts network for one’s own ideals. The result is a confusing mixture of alliances and rivalries between organisations, groups of artists, policy makers, arts bureaucrats and managers, and audiences. Art is always constrained by highly refined institutional and professional standards and expectations. The issue is not, therefore, about artistic freedom as opposed to controlled expression, but is rather about professional power and the shifting back and forth of authority and control between the artistic and political establishments. Although currently on the ascendent, the charismatic power of the political elite is not assured in the long run.

The category ‘art’ is, therefore, at once constant and changing, maintaining its essential continuity, status and integrity as art despite transformation. Particular distinguishing categories, such as art as quantifiable, are invented and interchanged in a continuing dialogue between interested parties. Whatever it consists of, the work is still funded as art. Through this interchange, each actor endeavours to establish generalised acceptance for their particular vision of artistic worth whether it be economic, educational, inclusive or aesthetic. Statements about art are manipulated by the different actors to assert the authenticity of their account. These identity forming tools, and the channels of power attached to them, are diverse, existing as fleeting exchanges between individuals, declarations at public meetings, and rhetorical flourishes within policy documents and newspaper articles. Discourses about art therefore acquire both material and social substance.

I have elaborated an approach to the study of art which moves beyond the aesthetic/autonomous and institutional models proffered by philosophy, as well as the base/superstructural thesis (Ween, 2000) presented by Marxist sociologists. Foucault's own interests lies more with the genealogy of relations of force, their

tactics and strategic developments (Gordon, 1980), but his perception of powerful operations is one of grass roots struggles through 'the fine webs of power', rather than power as subordinate to over-arching systems of interest or a reductive economism. On the one hand, discourses are powerfully bound, but on the other hand the structures within which the play of statements operate -- the effects they have, the events they 'inspire' -- are not necessarily as systematically present as the structuralist model would lead us to believe. Foucault allows for the resistant to exist alongside the systematic. The multi-structured ordering of things lays down the conditions of possibility within which thoughts, events and action thread and weave their unpredictable path. In my research, I have particularly emphasised the simultaneous construction of, and slippages between, the various registers of distinction. Rather than seek out perfect continuity between say government policies and administrative practices, I have tried to acknowledge how the production, exchange, reception and reprojection of government dictats is imperfect and fragmentary, and consequently, how structural conditions are contested, schemes of thought are partial, symbolic processes do not contain a unified message, and individual subjectivity defies and diffuses structural reductionism. Power contains its own counterweight. By tracing relationships between government agencies, arts institutions, and key individuals I develop an account of discursive regimes as moving through network structures. I also integrate these accounts with a more phenomenological appreciation of specific instances and exceptional occurrences. I have attempted to draw the reader's gaze back down from the heavens.

To conclude, I should consider whether undertaking this research has succeeded in laying to rest the ghosts I spoke of in chapter two. Certainly this project has enabled me to pursue and articulate clear areas of intellectual and personal interest. Importantly for me, it has also provided an empirical platform for expressing the particularity of artistic practice and consequently its dubious democratic foundations and claims. When considered in the context of public subsidy these conclusions are of particular concern. Given this, I have avoided aligning myself uncritically with artistic commitments to art for its own sake -- a position which potentially places me in an awkward situation in relation to many of those who I researched. Were the field more representative I would have less difficulty with public support for pure enjoyment or



egalitarian 'enlightenment'. I do not, therefore, consider government encroachment into the artistic field as necessarily 'a bad thing'. Indeed, my belief in art as a highly situated and socially-specific media naturally inclines me towards removing protection and exposing the field to open market competition. Why should artists receive subsidy while the same privileges are not accorded to architects, crafts people, philosophers, landscape gardeners and so on? This is, I think, a powerful argument for the removal and/or re-rationalising of public subsidy.

On the other hand, the contextualised theory of art I have developed, coupled with a political commitment to the redistribution of cultural authority and privilege, has its weakness. It is difficult, for instance, to shake the memory that I once cried in front of a Salvador Dali painting. How can this visceral response be explained in the intellectual and political terms outlined above? Do art works have their own emotional agency (Rose, 2001)? It is also possible, as Bourdieu would argue, that Dali's painting resounded profoundly with my own cultural capital. I think this is true. But I also suspect that there is something peculiar to creative expression of all kinds which imbues it with the capacity to touch certain people in certain ways under certain circumstances. I believe that rather than attempt to suppress this, academic theories of art and government prescriptions for art should hold onto this lively frisson between the real and the imagined significance of objects. This is the mystery of modern art, and its capacity to evade capture is what holds our interest. As long as the artistic profession has the ability to maintain this tension between the universal and the relative, we will never know the answer, and we will continue to invest in those whom we believe have access to its rewards.

## Appendix

### Fieldwork diary

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Appendix details the various meetings, conferences, conversations, programmes and events analysed. Days spent not attending specific events are listed as ‘general observation’. My own reflections on the activities researched appear as ‘interpretive notes’. The activity, time, date and primary individuals involved are all listed.

The following abbreviations are used within chapters to indicate whence evidence has been gathered:

C	Conversation
CM	Consultation meeting
CP	Conference proceedings
DF	Discussion forum
HE	Hanging exhibition
GO	General observation
GT	Gallery talk
IT	Interpretive notes
L	Lecture
M	Meeting
PF	Public forum
PV	Private view
S	Seminar

T	Talk
TC	Telephone Call

The abbreviations correspond with the empirical material quoted rather than the broad context in which it appeared. For example, a quote from a conversation during a meeting on 14 July 1998 will appear as 'arts officer, Appendix, 1, C'.

1. Meeting \* - arts officer, West End, 14 July 1998.
2. Meeting \* - arts officers, SAC, Manor Place, 20 July 1998.
3. Interpretive notes \* - 20 July 1998.
4. Lecture 'Culture and the New Scotland - an Exploration of the Role of the Arts under a Scottish Parliament' \* - Magnus Linklater, The Lothian European Lectures, Napier University, 2 November, 1998.
5. Lecture 'Dilemmas in the History Museum \* - Creating the Museum of Scotland' - National Museum of Scotland, 27 November 1998.
6. Lecture 'The Importance of Museums to National Identity' \* - Professor Mikhail Piotrovsky, The Lothian European Lectures, National Museum of Scotland, 3 December 1998.
7. Telephone call \* - arts officer, home, 8 December 1998.
8. Meeting \* - arts officer, (approx.) December 1998.
9. Conversation \* - artist, Canonmills, 16 December 1998.
10. Meeting \* - community arts administrators, Out of the Blue, 13 January 1999.
11. Meeting - arts officer, home, 20 January 1999.
12. Seminar - Scottish Arts Network Seminar, Festival Theatre, 21 January 1999.
13. Meeting - curator, Macdonald Rd, 28 January 1999.
14. Interpretive notes - Private view 'Peter Doig/Udomsak Krisanamis', Fruitmarket Gallery, 29 January 1999.
15. Meeting - gallery manager, Southern Cross Cafe, 2 February 1999.
16. Seminar 'Berkley's American House: A modern view' - Joseph Masheck, Edinburgh College of Art, 2 February 1999.
17. Meeting 'Scottish Arts in the 21st Century' - Fruitmarket Gallery, 3 February 1999.

18. Meeting - arts administrator, Filmhouse, 5 February 1999.
19. Telephone call - arts officer, home, 4 February 1999.
20. Interpretive notes - 8 February 1999.
21. Telephone call - gallery manager, home, 11 February 1999.
22. Conversation - artist and musician, Newport, 13 February 1999.
23. Meeting \* - Grants Assessment Meeting, Arts Development Section, CEC, 15 February 1999.
24. Interpretive notes - 15 February 1999.
25. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 16 February 1999.
26. Lift home - arts officer, 16 February 1999.
27. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 22 February 1999.
28. Interpretive notes - 22 February 1999.
29. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 23 February 1999.
30. Lift to meeting - arts officers, 23 February 1999.
31. Meeting - Voluntary Sector Officer Working Group, CEC, Waterloo Place, 23 February 1999.
32. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 24 February 1999.
33. Meeting - arts officer, 24 February 1999.
34. Interpretive notes - 24 February 1999.
35. Consultation meeting 'Grants Consultation Feedback Session' - organised by Arts Development Section, CEC, Meadowbank Sports Centre, 25 February 1999.
36. Interpretive notes - 25 February 1999.
37. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 26 February 1999.
38. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 1 March 1999.
39. Interpretive notes - 1 March 1999.
40. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 2 March 1999.
41. Interpretive notes a) - 2 March 1999.
42. Meeting - curator, Macdonald Road, 2 March 1999.
43. Interpretive notes b) - 2 March 1999.
44. Meeting - arts officers, Joint SAC/CEC Client Meeting, SAC, Manor Place, 3 March 1999.
45. Meeting - Service Plan Agreement, Arts Development Section, CEC, 3 March

- 1999.
46. Interpretive notes - 3 March 1999.
  47. Meeting 'Beyond the Fringe: Placing Art at the Heart of the Nation' - SAC fringe meeting, Scottish Labour Party Conference, Theatre Royal, Glasgow, 6 March 1999.
  48. Talk 'Women and Art (Engender Dialogues)' - Collective Gallery, 8 March, 1999.
  49. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 8 March 1999.
  50. Meeting - Recreation Department Committee Meeting, CEC, 8 March 1999.
  51. Meeting - curators, gallery manager, education officer, marketing and press officer, Talbot Rice Gallery, 9 March 1999.
  52. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 10 March 1999.
  53. Talk - 'Public art' curator, Huntley House Museum, 10 March 1999.
  54. Interpretive notes - 10 March 1999.
  55. Meeting - gallery managers, press and marketing officers, The Audience Business, Talbot Rice Gallery, 11 March 1999.
  56. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 12 March 1999.
  57. Consultation meeting 'Scottish Arts in the 21st Century' - organised by SAC, Edinburgh International Conference Centre, 16 March 1999.
  58. Conversation - arts officer, Seattle Coffee House, Lothian Road, 16 March 1999.
  59. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 16 March 1999.
  60. Interpretive notes - 16 March 1999.
  61. Conversation - arts officer, Seattle Coffee House, Lothian Road, 16 March 1999.
  62. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 19 March 1999.
  63. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 22 March 1999.
  64. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 23 March 1999.
  65. Meeting - gallery manager, artists, Management Meeting , Collective Gallery, 23 March 1999.
  66. Consultation meeting 'Vision Day for the Visual Arts in Scotland' - organised by SAC, Edinburgh College of Art, 24 March 1999.
  67. Interpretive notes - home, 24 March 1999.



68. Meeting - Recreation Department Committee Meeting, CEC, 25 March 1999.
69. Meeting - arts and sports officers, Arts Development Section, CEC, 25 March 1999.
70. Meeting - lecturer and post-graduate students, Edinburgh College of Art, 27 March 1999.
71. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 27 March 1999.
72. Hanging exhibition *Evolution Isn't Over Yet* - Fruitmarket Gallery, 29 March 1999.
73. Meeting - gallery managers, curators, *Contemporary Focus*, Talbot Rice Gallery, 29 March 1999.
74. Meeting - Edinburgh College of Art post-graduate students, Seattle Coffee House, Lothian Road, 30 March 1999.
75. Hanging exhibition *Evolution Isn't Over Yet* - Fruitmarket Gallery, 30 March 1999.
76. Interpretive notes - On Fruitmarket Gallery, home, 30 March 1999.
77. Meeting - arts officers, clerical assistant, Arts Development Section, CEC, 31 March 1999.
78. Meeting - Voluntary Sector Officer Working Group, Waterloo Place, CEC, 31 March 1999.
79. Hanging exhibition *Evolution Isn't Over Yet* - Fruitmarket Gallery, 31 March 1999.
80. Hanging exhibition *Evolution Isn't Over Yet* - Fruitmarket Gallery, 1 April 1999.
81. Private View *Evolution Isn't Over Yet* - Fruitmarket Gallery, 1 April 1999.
82. Meeting - Edinburgh College of Art lecturer and students, the Malt Shovel, (?) April 1999.
83. Meeting - Lottery Officers Group, CEC, 6 April 1999.
84. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 6 April 1999.
85. Interpretive notes a) - 6 April 1999.
86. Interpretive notes b) - 6 April 1999.
87. Interpretive notes c) - 6 April 1999.
88. Interpretive notes - 7 April 1999.
89. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 8 April 1999.

90. General observation - City Art Centre, arts officer, Education Department, CEC, 9 April 1999.
91. General observation- Malt Shovel, lecturer, art students - 12 April 1999.
92. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 13 April 1999.
93. Interpretive notes - 13 April 1999.
94. Seminar 'Facing the Future: Arts and Audiences in the World of Connexity' - Ian Christie, Demos, organise by SAC, Gilmorehill Centre, Glasgow, 14 April 1999.
95. Public meeting - Recreation Department Public Consultation Exercise, CEC, City Chambers, 14 April 1999.
96. Glasgow Art Fair - Glasgow, 15 April 1999.
97. General observation - Collective Gallery, 16 April 1999.
98. Seminar 'New Developments in National Lottery Funding' - organised by SAC, Festival Theatre, 20 April 1999.
99. Interpretive notes - 23 April 1999.
100. Gallery talk *Evolution Isn't Over Yet* - exhibiting artists, Fruitmarket Gallery, 24 April 1999.
101. Gallery talk *Citizen 2000* - exhibiting artists, Collective Gallery, 24 April 1999.
102. Conference proceedings a) 'Scottish Sculpture Trust 21st Birthday Conference' - organised by Scottish Sculpture Trust, Royal Museum of Scotland, Chamber Street, 24 April 1999.
103. Conference proceedings b) 'Scottish Sculpture Trust 21st Birthday Conference' - organised by Scottish Sculpture Trust, Royal Museum of Scotland, Chamber Street, 24 April 1999.
104. Interpretive notes - 24 April 1999.
105. Hanging exhibition a) *Locale* - City Art Centre, CEC, 26 April 1999.
106. Hanging exhibition b) *Locale* - City Art Centre, CEC, 27 April 1999.
107. Hanging exhibition c) *Locale* - City Art Centre, CEC, 27 April 1999.
108. Public meeting 'The Scottish Arts Network' - Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh, 27 April 1999.
109. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 4 May 1999.
110. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 5 May 1999.

111. Interpretive notes - 5 May 1999.
112. Public forum 'Ideas and Inspirations in Contemporary Art Practice' (tape recorded) - Fruitmarket Gallery, 7 May 1999.
113. Interpretive notes - 11 May 1999.
114. Interpretive notes - 12 May 1999.
115. Interpretive notes - 13 May 1999.
116. Conference proceedings 'The Art of Inclusion: Breaking down the Barriers to Creativity' (tape recorded) - Out of the Blue, New Street, 14 May 1999.
117. Meeting 'National Artists Association Dialogues - The New Scottish Parliament' (tape recorded) - organised by NAA, Stills, 14 May 1999.
118. Meeting - curator and art lecturer, City Art Centre, CEC, 19 May 1999.
119. Gallery talk *Locale* - curator, City Art Centre, CEC, 20 May 1999.
120. Meeting - art writer, City Art Centre, CEC, 20 May 1999.
121. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 21 May 1999.
122. General observation - Arts Development Section, CEC, 24 May 1999.
123. Interpretive notes - 24 May 1999.
124. Telephone call - gallery manager, 27 May 1999.
125. General observation - City Art Centre, CEC, 31 May 1999.
126. Interpretive notes - 31 May 1999.
127. Telephone call - community education worker, 21 May 1999.
128. Meeting - curator, Elephant House Cafe, 1 June 1999.
129. Meeting - gallery manager, Southern Cross Cafe, 2 June 1999.
130. Meeting - curator, Talbot Rice Gallery, 2 June 1999.
131. Gallery talk *Locale* - exhibiting artist, City Art Centre, 3 June 1999.
132. Meeting - artist, City Art Centre Cafe, 3 June 1999.
133. Public forum 'Audience and interpretation: the artist's perspective' (tape recorded) - City Art Centre, 4 June 1999.
134. Interpretive notes - 18 June 1999.
135. Degree Show - Edinburgh College of Art, 22 June 1999.
136. Meeting - access co-ordinator, Edinburgh College of Art, 22 June 1999.
137. Conversation - art student, Edinburgh College of Art, 23 June 1999.
138. Telephone call - art writer, home, 23 June 1999.
139. Public Forum 'Practical Support Systems for Artists' (tape recorded) -

- Talbot Rice Gallery, 25 June 1999.
140. Radio programme 'Start the Week' \* - BBC Radio 4, hosted by Jeremy Paxman with Francis Stonor Saunders (author of 'Who Paid the Piper: The CIA and the Cultural War', Granta Publications: London, 1999), 28 June 1999.
  141. Conversation - gallery manager, Collective Gallery, 28 June 1999.
  142. Gallery talk *In the Summertime* - exhibiting artists, Talbot Rice Gallery, 2 July 1999.
  143. Private View *Scotland's Art* - City Art Centre, CEC, 2 July 1999.
  144. Seminar *Scotland's Art* - Maria Devaney, City Art Centre, 8 July 1999.
  145. Gallery talk *In the Summertime* - exhibiting artists, Talbot Rice Gallery, 9 July 1999.
  146. Gallery talk *In the Summertime* - exhibiting artists, Talbot Rice Gallery, 16 July 1999.
  147. Telephone call - arts officer, home, 29 July 1999.
  148. Discussion forum 'Enlightenment and the Future' - Steven Gale (chair), Dr Nicholas Philipson, 'Cultural Reflections' organised by the Edinburgh International Festival, The Hub, 11 August 1999.
  149. Discussion forum 'Movers and Shakers' - Janice Forsyth, Lynne Ramsay (chair), Ruth McKenzie, Peter Mullan, 'Cultural Reflections' organised by the Edinburgh International Festival, The Hub, 11 August 1999.
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  151. Discussion forum 'High Art, low Pressure' - Richard Coles, Catherine Lockerbie, Graham McKenzie, Ruth Wishart (chair) 'Cultural Reflections' organised by the Edinburgh International Festival, The Hub, 12 August 1999.
  152. Discussion forum 'Exchanging Culture' - Sven Brown (chair), Giles Havergal, Joyce Macmillan, Andrew Nairne, 'Cultural Reflections' organised by the Edinburgh International Festival, The Hub, 13 August 1999.
  153. Discussion forum 'Paying the Piper' (tape recorded) - Richard Coles (chair), David Greig, 'Cultural Reflections', organised by the Edinburgh International Festival, The Hub, 13 August 1999.

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155. Discussion forum 'What's Wrong with Cultural Elitism' - 'Culture Wars: Dumbing down, wishing up?', hosted by LM magazine, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Charlotte Square, 19 August 1999.
156. Gallery talk *British Art Show 5* - exhibiting artist, Dean Gallery, 17 October 1999.
157. Consultation meeting 'Utopia, Reality, Resolution: The Status of the Artist into the 21st Century' \* - organised by the National Artists Association, Glasgow Film Theatre, 21 October 1999.
158. Seminar 'making/thinking: artists build' - about Erwin Heerich, Edinburgh College of Art, 5 November 1999.
159. Public Consultation 'A National Cultural Strategy' - organised by Arts and Cultural Heritage Division, Dundee, 15 November 1999.
160. Gallery talk *Flower Show* - exhibiting artists, Fruitmarket Gallery, 20 November 1999.
161. Gallery talk *Postcards on Photography* \* - exhibiting artists, Stills, 25 November 1999.
162. Radio programme 'Call You and Yours' \* - BBC Radio 4, with Peter White, 20 January 2000.
163. Lecture 'Personal Choice' \* - Adrian Wiszniewski, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, 7 February 2000.
164. Gallery talk 'anne bevan/graeme todd' - exhibiting artists, Fruitmarket Gallery, 26 February 2000.
165. Seminar 'The Future of Creativity' \* - Professor Janice Kirkpatrick, Royal Museums of Scotland, 9 March 2000.
166. Conference proceedings 'The 'Lifelong Learning for Scotland's Cultural Sector' \* - organised by Scottish Cultural Training Forum, The Gateway Theatre, 27 March 2000.
167. Gallery tour *British Art Show 5* - artists, Collective Gallery, Fruitmarket Gallery, City Art Centre, 13 April 2000.
168. Conversation \* - artists, Fruitmarket Gallery, 13 April 2000.



169. Lecture 'Susan Hillier Lecture' \* - British Art Show 5, Fruitmarket Gallery, 2 May 2000.
170. Gallery talk 'Contemporary Art, Exploring Boundaries' \* - 'British Art Show 5', City Art Centre, 11 May 2000.
171. Gallery talk \* - artist, Collective Gallery, (approx.) May 2000.
172. Television programme 'The Enemy Within' \* - BBC 2 'Art Zone', 14 May 2000.
173. Meeting 'Creative Industries Cluster Meeting' \* - Scottish Enterprise, Glasgow, 15 May 2000.
174. Radio programme 'Start the Week' \* - BBC Radio 4, hosted by Jeremy Paxman with Claire Fox (Institute of Ideas), 28 June 2000.
175. Conference proceedings 'Visiting Rights? How Museums and Galleries Serve their Public' \* - Tate Modern, 30 June - 1 July 2000.
176. Radio programme 'Lebrecht Live' (tape recorded) \* - BBC Radio 3, 25 October 2000.
177. Symposium 'I love alternative spaces'(tape recorded) \* - hosted by Collective Gallery, City Cafe, 9 December 2000.
178. 'Scotland's National Cultural Strategy - Where Next?' \* - seminar hosted by Synergy, Gilmorehill, Glasgow, 25 June 2001.
179. Lecture 'Art & Ideas in Scotland: Towards the Present' \* - Murdo Macdonald, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, 20 November 2001.
180. Conversation \* - artist, home, 26 January 2001.
181. Telephone call\* - arts officer, home 6 March 2001.
182. Conversation \* - artist, home, 9 March 2001.

## **Note**

- \* Consists of material which has not been analysed using HyperResearch, either due to an administrative mistake, or because the data was recorded in the lead-up to conducting full fieldwork, or in the months following the main field work period. The material has subsequently been analysed directly from original transcriptions or tape recordings.

Thirteen primary coding sets were devised. These were subsequently divided into 126 singular coding categories. Not all coding categories appear within a unifying coding set. For example, categories such as ‘Art work status of the object’ were not complex enough to require detailed differentiation. Additionally, while ‘thoughts on transcribing’ is the coding set used for all ‘interpretive notes’ it did not need to be divided into multiple coding categories. It attained the status of a set, however, as this enabled me to maintain the distinction during analysis between immediate observation and reflection ‘after the event’. This is the only exception to the rule.

### Primary coding sets

1. Art
2. Artists
3. Audiences
4. Benchmarking
5. CEC
6. Decision making
7. Edinburgh
8. Funding
9. Galleries
10. New Labour
11. SAC
12. Scottish Parliament
13. Thoughts on transcribing

### Coding categories

Coding sets appear in capital letters.

1. ART and authenticity
2. ART and elitism
3. ART and private sector

4. ART college isolation relevance
5. ART college traditional
6. ART criticism and media
7. ART definitions of good art
8. ART forms rivalry between
9. ART helps economy cultural industry
10. ART helps national identity
11. ART helps people
12. ART helps social exclusion regeneration
13. ART helps society community
14. ART lobbying SP CEC SAC government
15. ART new or rival types practice
16. ART politicisation of
17. ART professional v amateur
18. ART public art spacial issues
19. ART strategic political control
20. ART threats to autonomy of
21. ART unpopular identity crisis
22. ART v administration
23. ART v marketing
24. ART v other services
25. ART v popular culture
26. ART widening expectations
27. ARTISTS commercial v marginal
28. ARTISTS expectations of
29. ARTISTS how see self and role
30. ARTISTS individual's work
31. ARTISTS status in network
32. ARTISTS support needed
33. ARTISTS v amateurs
34. Arts education importance of
35. Art work status of the object
36. Assessment accountability performance indicators

37. Audience development government CEC SAC agenda
38. AUDIENCES access v quality
39. AUDIENCES different types of
40. AUDIENCES new audiences access
41. AUDIENCES status in galleries
42. AUDIENCES status with artists
43. AUDIENCES why not attending
44. BENCHMARKING aims and function
45. BENCHMARKING arts aims
46. BENCHMARKING controversy
47. BENCHMARKING questionnaires
48. BENCHMARKING rivalry between departments
49. Best Value
50. CAC background staff policies
51. CEC administration
52. CEC culture conservative
53. CEC grants criteria administration v art
54. CEC grants processes managing
55. CEC how value different art forms
56. CEC job remit more strategy led
57. CEC management autocratic
58. CEC management practices
59. CEC priorities for art general
60. CEC priorities wider agenda
61. CEC Recreation strategies aims methods
62. CEC relationship with artists galleries
63. CEC relationships between staff and departments
64. CEC SAC rivalry different approaches
65. Collective Gallery
66. Conceptual Art
67. Contemporary art hostility towards
68. Contemporary Focus
69. Creativity

70. Curating different approaches
71. DECISION MAKING bureaucracy
72. DECISION MAKING decentralise
73. DECISION MAKING objectivity
74. EDINBURGH v London
75. EDINBURGH art changes enlightenment
76. EDINBURGH scene changing network
77. EDINBURGH scene individual power inclusion exclusion
78. EDINBURGH traditional v contemporary
79. EDINBURGH v Glasgow
80. Evolution background
81. Finances
82. Fruitmarket Gallery
83. FUNDING CEC v SAC or partners
84. FUNDING client v funder values
85. FUNDING competition insecurity
86. FUNDING individual projects
87. FUNDING issues
88. FUNDING Lottery issues
89. FUNDING strategy led influenced
90. FUNDING the game
91. GALLERIES alternative spaces
92. GALLERIES exhibitions hanging shows
93. GALLERIES infrastructure
94. GALLERIES relationship between staff artist
95. GALLERIES rivalry between or collaboration
96. GALLERIES status of education
97. Interpretation
98. Local background
99. Management partnerships
100. Methods and diary
101. National Artist's Association
102. NEW LABOUR agenda



103. NEW LABOUR arts agenda
104. Partnership working
105. Policy hostility relevance
106. Politics party manifestos
107. SAC accountability
108. SAC balancing obligations
109. SAC consultation priorities
110. SAC education agenda
111. SAC management practices general
112. SAC priorities general
113. SAC priorities visual art
114. SAC relationship with artist galleries
115. SAC Vision Day priorities
116. Scottish art status of
117. Scottish culture
118. Social inclusion and equalities
119. SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT agenda and strategies
120. SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT committee structure
121. SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT cultural strategy
122. SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT opportunity and art
123. SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT SAC and CEC roles in
124. Talbot Rice Gallery Summertime
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